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eXtreme novel
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Elsword Time Trouble Volume 2

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0. To the past once more

Boy who could travel through time finally made his decision to join hands with the suspicious entity.

“.....How long do you plan to hold onto my hand?”

Eun grabbed Add’s hand tightly and didn’t let go. Her outer appearance was that of a slender girl. But grasp of her hand was so powerful that he couldn’t pull his hand out.

“I plan to enjoy this for at least three days since this is such a memorable moment where boy has joined hands with me. So I’d like boy to stay still.”

Eun made a sly smile as she pulled Add towards her. Surprised, Add tried to hold his ground by putting strength in his legs. But he was no match for her in physical strength.

“Ah. What?! Hey! Hey!!”

Her face was getting closer. She let off such voluptuous aura that you couldn’t believe her base was that of a naïve Ara. Eun’s lips were gradually getting closer.

“What do you think you are doing?!”

Add instinctively moved the Dynamos to block the gap between their faces. Add scowled at Eun after barely managing her lips from getting any closer.

But Eun still smiled while grabbing onto Add’s hand so tightly that it hurt. She was not pulling Add in forcefully anymore but it didn’t look like she had any intention to let go.

“What’s wrong, boy? Didn’t you need my help?”

“This shouldn’t be the time to be making jokes like this.”

Even at this moment, Demons that were after Eve were plotting their next move behind the scenes. Shouldn’t they come up with a plan quickly and act?

“For boy, isn’t time something that’s even more abundant the endlessly flowing water? It shouldn’t be a big deal to play along with me for a while.”

“Stop with the jokes....”

Add words stalled as he looked at Eun’s voluptuous smile. He didn’t know what absurd deeds might be done to him if he agreed with her here.

Eun licked her lips as if to show him..... this made Add feel even more uncomfortable.

“Entertainment, this is just a light entertainment.”

“I don’t care so let go of me already.....”

“My, it seems all boy cares about is finishing his own business. Well, all men are usually like that..... But doesn’t boy still have something he wants from me?”

Was that a threat saying it wouldn’t be fun if Add didn’t play along with her? Add stopped for a moment then clenched his free right hand into a fist.

“You want to have a go to see who’s stronger?”

“Why so serious? All boy has to do is play along with my light joke.”

“It’s too suspicious so I’ll have to decline. If you don’t listen to what I say.....I can make you listen by force.”

Add made his determination and moved the Dynamos. By Add’s calculations, his chance of victory in a direct confrontation was around 50 to 60 percent considering Ara was his opponent.

But one who was ridiculing him right now was Eun borrowing Ara’s body. He had never seen her skills before but it could be assumed that they were much higher than Ara’s.

He didn’t want to clash with her if possible. But he can’t show any weakness here.

He had determined to cooperate with Eun. But that didn’t mean he fully trusted Eun. A confrontation to seize the initiative was obviously bound to occur whenever you made an alliance with someone this suspicious.....

“Just like back in Altera Core.”

“What?”

Add asked in response to Eun’s sudden words. Eun lightly shook her head with a bitter smile. While Add was still startled by the gloomy expression Eun had shown, Eun moved on to the serious topic.

“Alright, I’ll leave the entertainment for later.... Let’s talk about what we have to do. But before I start, let me tell you that there will be many cases where I won’t answer your questions. So forgive me.”

“You’re going to withhold information?”

It meant that while Eun knew various things, she wouldn’t tell Add. She should know a lot of valuable information with her power to see into the future...

“Does boy explain the circumstances to the girl beforehand whenever he time travels? Doesn’t he think now that it’s meaningless?”

“That’s different from what you said before. You clearly said....”

“I said I’ll help boy with obtaining the girl. I never said I’d tell boy everything.”

Eun drew the line as she shook her head. Add didn’t like this condition but suppressed himself for now.

He couldn’t save Eve from Demons no matter how much he struggled alone. Although Eun was extremely suspicious, her help was necessary.

“Also, you have to exactly follow what I say from now on. You don’t need to listen to what Ara says, but you must listen to me.”

“....So you won’t explain the situation or give me any information, but expect me to obediently follow everything you say?”

Add let out an empty laugh at this absurd condition. Eun opened her eyes and made a beaming smile.

“COBO service uses the ‘Free to Play and Pay Later’ model after all. Wasn’t it thanks to me that boy could time travel all this time?”

“....”

“Did you possibly think that was for free?”

Add could return from future where Eve was destroyed all this time because Eun had designated the Time Space Coordinates for him. It was very important and necessary role so Add couldn’t blatantly deny Eun’s conditions.

“So you want me to pay up now?”

“I would imagine it would be scarier if such service was for free don’t you? In the first place, didn’t boy suspect me because he thought I wanted to help for free? You should be able to ease your mind now that I’m requesting for an appropriate price.”

There was no flaw in her logic but it still felt like he’d fallen into a trap. Add made a bitter sigh and nodded.

“Fine, I’ll comply for now.”

“I’ll be expecting you to do so all the time from now on. In boy’s perceived time that is.”

Eun seemed satisfied and let go of Add’s hand. Add who had just complied with such reluctant conditions asked bluntly.

“If you’re done bragging, tell me already what I should do from now on. It couldn’t be that you’re saying you’d defeat all the demons by yourself.”

“There would be no point in doing so even if I could do such things.”

Eun shook her head then leaned her spear against her shoulders.

“Go, boy. To the past.”

“Time travel again? To when?”

The current situation where Demons were after Eve shouldn’t change even if Add time traveled. Or did she mean Add should time travel to change something that could change this situation?

Eun didn’t even bother to explain.

“You’ll find out when you go. It would be better for you to experience it yourself rather than having me tell you.”

“.....”

Not even telling him what time he was traveling to? It was way too untrustworthy but Add had no other choice but to follow Eun’s suggestion.

The scene of Eve getting destroyed time and time again flashed by in Add’s head.

He didn’t ever want to see that again. For this purpose, he could bear with anything.

“Alright, I’ll go.”

Add made a cold smile as he clenched his fists.

Nothing could get worse than right now anyways.

1. I thought this was the bottom floor but there was a basement

Splash!!

Add and got up immediately because he suddenly became drenched in water.

“Phwa! Just where is this place.....?”

Eun set the Time Space Coordinates and sent him to this time without explaining anything to Add. Add realized that he had just fallen into a river and shook his head to dry off the water.

Surface of the water shined beautifully as the sun shined upon it.

“This is....”

This place seemed strangely familiar. As Add muttered, he suddenly realized that back of his head was prickling. He could feel people's presence behind him.

“Just what....?”

With his entire body soaked wet with water, Add muttered as he swung his Dynamos around to look back. First, he should find out current time and information and then.....

He locked eyes with three girls.

That weren't wearing anything.

Add numbly let out a groan because of all the bright skin in front of his eyes. His brain's processing speed couldn't keep up with all this messy information that just got scattered across his brain.

“.....Huh?”

Three girls were staring at him with a stifled expression. Why were they looking at him like that when they were the ones who weren't wearing anything? Add was about to glare back at them.....then realized that these girls looked very familiar.

Actually, he should have recognized sooner.

Since they were Rena, Ara and Eve.

“.....”

Add was so shocked from the naked girls in front of him that his situation assessment slowed down. The fact that these three girls were people he knew confused him even more. Add froze up in his spot.

What should I say? What should I do? He couldn't figure anything out. The three girls were also frozen from Add's sudden appearance. They didn't even move a finger.

Extremely awkward silence.

“Ugh....”

Just when Add couldn't stand the silence anymore and let out a painful groan, the girls who were mindlessly blinking until now slowly started to move.

“Kiiiiiiiiyyyyah!!! M, Mr.Add?!”

“Moby, to battle mode.”

Add also abruptly came to his senses after seeing reactions of Ara who let out a high pitched scream and Eve who coldly operated her gears.

“What!! Why are you screaming?! You sent me here!!”

The Time Space Coordinates Eun sets up didn't just determine which time he traveled to. It also determined the exact place.

Thus, Add appearing right here should have been Eun's doing.

“Umm, Add....”

Just when Add who had fallen into this helpless situation was trying to protest to Ara, more accurately to Eun..... He heard a chilling voice

“I'll hear your excuse later.”

Pew! Add instantly sensed danger and quickly tried to move his Dynamos. But the pain came first.

“Kugh!”

Add let out a short scream as his body started to fly backwards. Add finally realized what time this was.

It was the day when they defeated Banthus who was commanding Nasod Miners. Second day since the El Search Party was formed. The day when Add encountered Eun for the first time.

That was far as Add could think as he absentmindedly flew across after being hit by an arrow.

Splash!!



“Add numbly let out a groan because of all the bright skin
in front of his eyes.”

Add could see the night sky when he opened his eyes. His chest hurt as if it was about to shatter.

“....Owww.”

“Are you awake?”

A soft voice was heard amidst the sound of burning campfire. Add was hesitant to move his body so he just moved his eyes to look beside him.

Rena sat modestly across the campfire between them. Of course, she was wearing clothes.

“....”

Add immediately tried to get up as he recalled the shocking scene before he passed out but was forced to grab on to his chest. His chest hurt whenever he moved.

“Ah, sorry. Did I overdo it?”

“.....This is nothing.”

Add sat up and looked around while he rubbed his chest. There were only two of them in the vicinity. There was a campfire in front of him but this wasn’t their campsite.

“I thought we should talk separately.”

Rena noticed Add looking confused and explained. She must have separated Add from rest of the group while he was unconscious.

Well of course, you couldn’t keep the molester and his victims in one spot.

Add was dumbfounded after logically understanding his current situation. He came here because Eun had told him to.....and suddenly got accused of being a molester.

Never mind saving Eve, he was about to get kicked out of the El Search Party.

“W, Wait, this isn’t what it looks like!”

“Hmm? What is?”

“That’s.....”

Add was about to explain his situation but saw Rena’s face lit by the campfire’s light and couldn’t continue his words. She looked very beautiful with side of her face reddened by the fire...but that wasn’t important right now.... Add wasn’t able to explain his case.

I unwillingly became a molester because I was time traveling. I’m sorry!Who’d believe such an explanation?

Rena waited quietly for Add who was hesitating to speak. Add bit his lower lip seeing Rena wait for him like this. Rena granting Add a chance to explain himself was already huge gesture of generosity on her part.

Since the El Search Party was.... group that had just formed yesterday.

Tracking and catching Banthus together, accepting Elder Citizens' request and attacking Wally's Castle together were all events that didn't exist anymore.

They might as well be complete strangers.

And Add really didn't like this fact. Add lowered his head and apologized with a vexed voice.

".....It wasn't on purpose but I'll apologize."

"Mmhmm, why did you do it?"

Rena didn't threaten or shout about how he should give her a proper explanation. Well, to separate him and ask calmly like this.....this was the normal response for Rena Add had known.

But Add wasn't in a great mood at the moment so his tone became rough.

"I said I apologize."

"Add, I asked you why."

Rena's voice was extremely soft. She was also a victim yet her tone sounded like she didn't mind that fact at all.

Add had already known he wasn't in any position to speak so roughly. He couldn't continue to act angry when Rena tried to coax him with a smooth tone like this.

"It's difficult to explain."

"Then could you explain more easily?"

"I told you it was difficult to explain. Why are you being so persistent?"

Add knew he wasn't in any position to get angry but still couldn't stop his rage from building up. Add's tone became rough again.

"Shouldn't you just kick out someone who committed a grave crime like this? Others should be angry at me as well."

“No one said such things.”

Rena still replied calmly. Add didn’t like her optimistic attitude so he stood up while grinding his teeth.

“Kukuk, then it should be over if I just leave now.”

All he had to do was beat Ara, no Eun up into pulp and hear her reasons. Then he can time travel again. He had no reason to waste his time with this useless conversation.

Add collected his Dynamos and was about to turn around when he heard an unexpected reply.

“Hmm, you can’t do that.”

“What?”

“I won’t allow you to quit like this.”

Rena shook her head resolutely.

Wasn’t it normal to kick out someone who did something indecent to his fellow party members? Could it be that not only Nasods but humans also became immoral as the time passed?

At a loss for words, Add stared at Rena but her decision did not change.

“If Add really wanted to do such things he would have done his best not to get caught.”

“.....”

Well she was probably right? Nasods bathing? It was rather interesting research subject when you thought about it.

“But only with that belief....”

“If you really don’t want to tell me why, then try talking to Eve and Ara as well. And tell me if you still want to quit the El Search Party after that.”

Rena drew the line clearly with a tone that said she didn’t want to hear any excuses. She plainly stared at Add..... Add felt uncomfortable even though she wasn’t glaring at him.

Her words contained a resolve that she won’t allow him to decline.

“Let’s have this talk again if you still want to quit after talking to the two of them.”

“....Kukuk, and if I refuse?”

Will she try to suppress him by force? Add had half expected her to do so but asked out of curiosity anyways. Rena made a beaming smile.

"If you're curious about what happens to guys that doesn't reflect on their actions after peeping at a girl's body.....you can take a seat right here."

Add felt a chill when Rena patted the spot in front of her with a smile. He got a feeling that something really terrifying was going happen to him if he refused.

"Kukukuk, I'll at least say some parting words to them."

He had to beat Eun up anyways. There was no particular reason for him to refuse when she was giving him the chance to talk to her.

.....It honestly wasn't because he was scared of Rena.

Rena told Add to sit here and wait while she went to get the others. Being left alone, Add scratched his head as he listened to the sound of the burning campfire.

"Why did it end up like this...?"

Let's put aside Eun sending him back without any information. Why did she have to drop him in middle of girls bathing? He'll have to ask if this was an accident or on purpose.

"She ended up making things more annoying for me."

The party had only met yesterday so it should be normal for him to never see the other party members again considering he had caused an incident this large. Add admitted this even though he was the perpetrator that had caused the incident.

He could somehow have gotten away by saying some lines if this situation had happened in 1 on 1 scenario.....

But not even Rena, the party's leader should be able to easily defend Add when he caused the incident so publically like this.

In the end, Rena had to prioritize the well being of the El Search Party members as a whole. If Add was in Rena's position, never mind giving the perpetrator a chance to explain himself, he would have chased the perpetrator off immediately.

"Kukuk, she's seriously too soft-hearted....."

Add sighed as he put two of his hands behind his head. He ended up having to do these disconcerting conversations when all he had to do was to time travel once more again.

Night sky came into Add's view as he muttered and lied down. Despite how the age had changed, fact that the stars looked so beautiful when viewed while lying down like this had not changed.

“Beautiful....”

“I didn’t come here to listen to you say such words.”

Add hadn’t sensed any presence approach in prior so he winced after suddenly hearing those words. He had forgotten to put the Dynamos into scouting mode and hadn’t realized that someone had come.

Eve stood expressionlessly across the campfire. She was alone.

“Did you come alone?”

Eve didn’t answer as she slowly approached the campfire. Add stared at Eve hesitantly and just raised his upper body from his spot.

Add didn’t know what kind of words he had to start off with. He was told to apologize but his mouth moved differently.

“So what business do you have with me?”

“I don’t particularly have any business with you.”

Eve spoke stiffly as if it was obvious. Her tone was like she was only here because Rena had requested her to.

But listening to her say this slightly agitated Add. Just who did she think he was suffering through all of this for?

“You....”

Eve stared at him quietly when he opened his mouth by impulse. Add couldn’t continue his words when he saw her pretty golden eyes shining from the campfire’s light.

Speaking like this to Eve that didn’t know anything would be nothing more than just Add whining. After realizing this, Add finally got some grasp on what to say.

“I’m sorry. The end.”

“.....You call that an apology?”

Eve became dumbfounded at Add’s flat words and asked back. But Add had already given up trying to speak to her seriously.

“It wasn’t on purpose but you wouldn’t believe me anyways right? So think whatever you want. I am really sorry. You got your apology right? Now just go play with Elsword or something.”

“Why do you mention Elsword here?”

Eve frowned slightly after listening to Add's openly cynical remarks. It was a significant reaction from Eve who rarely changed her expression.

Seeing such reaction from Eve, Add from before would have been burning with his lust for research by now. But Add just wanted to get this conversation over with right now.

"Well, isn't Elsword the one that's most important to you?"

"...."

He had said it unintentionally.....but it felt disgusting now that he had said it.

Consumed by strange feelings that he could not explain, Add lay down turning his back on Eve as he closed his eyes.

"I'm done now."

This event will become nonexistent too when he time travels again anyways. There was no point in him apologizing properly.

But despite Add's empty apology, no movement of Eve standing up could be sensed. Add had his back turned towards Eve now and was filled with both emotions of wanting to turn around to look and wanting Eve to leave already.

An uncomfortable silence even though they were together like he wanted.

"I....for you."

Add opened his mouth again while still having his backed turned towards Eve. Even though this talk will become nonexistent too but.....

"Mr.Add! You're so harsh!"

Angry voice rang out from above just when Add was about to speak. Surprised, Add looked up to see that Ara was sitting high up on a tree branch staring at him imposingly.

She looked very angry.

"You should apologize to Ms.Eve properly! That is not the attitude of someone who's apologizing!"

"Rena told us to talk separately. Why did you follow me Ara Haan?"

Eve seemed surprised too by Ara's sudden appearance. Ara revealed her intentions ever so proudly.

"If Mr.Add was really a molester then it would be dangerous to send Ms.Eve by herself! So I was listening in secret!"

This was the first time Add had seen someone confessing that they had been listening in secret so proudly. As Eve and Add became numb and was continuing to stare up in unison, Ara immediately jumped off from the tree and landed lightly on the ground.

“Now, Mr.Add, apologize properly to Ms.Eve!”

“Hey, wait.”

Add was at a loss for words and frowned as he glared at Ara. Eun was the one that had caused this mess. Didn’t she explain anything to Ara?

But it seemed Ara had misunderstood Add’s reaction and nodded.

“Ah, if it is too difficult to apologize by yourself I’ll also apologize with you. Mr.Add should be able to apologize more easily that way right?”

It seemed Ara was serious. She put down her spear on the ground and sat modestly beside Add. Still at a loss for words, Add was about to tell Ara off but winced.

Ara was giving him a very serious look.

“Mr.Add, no matter what your circumstances are, you have to apologize properly right now. My elder brother told me that guy’s excuses have absolutely no weight to them.”

Add gave up resisting after seeing Ara who was emitting a strange pressure towards him. Nothing good will happen here if he continued to resist.

Let’s just go along with what she says for now. That way he can talk with Eun sooner and time travel again.

“I’m sorry, Eve.”

“You have to say in detail what you did wrong and what you’re sorry about. Mr.Add.”

“About, what I did earlier today.....”

“Your voice is small. Ms.Eve won’t be able to hear you like that.”

Add became flabbergasted and glared at Ara who kept lecturing him from the side. But Ara looked at Add resolutely without any sign of shame.

“Anyone can make errors and mistakes. What’s more important is to apologize and reflect. If Mr.Add is a true martial artist then you must honestly accept your mistake!”

“I’m not a martial artist.....”

“Ms.Eve, could you wait for a moment? It looks like discussing this matter with Mr.Add might take a while.”

Ara carefully asked for Eve's consent while ignoring Add's mutter. It looked like Ara wasn't too comfortable with talking to Eve.

Eve was silently staring at the two's ridiculous show and nodded slightly. Ara seemed to ease her mind after seeing Eve's reaction and started to lecture Add again.

"Now, Mr.Add. Follow after me. I'm sorry for rudely peeping on you in my moment of carelessness! I will never do something like this again so please forgive me. Even though you can't believe me right now, I'll redeem myself with my actions in the future."

"....."

She wants him to say that? It was so absurd but Ara made a face telling Add that he must say those lines.

"Ah, could it be that you couldn't memorize it because it was too long? Then let me tell you again."

It looked like she wouldn't back off unless Add complied.

Add couldn't say those words as they were no matter what. So Add squabbled with Ara for quite a while before he managed to somewhat properly apologize to Eve.

Eve who had watched the two of them silently accepted Add's apology with a short answer.

"Understood, I hope this problem doesn't occur in the future."

"....."

Add was now tired because of Ara's persistence and could only reply with a head gesture. Eve stood up from her spot and stared at Add directly.

"Do you have anything more to say?"

"What else do you want?"

Could it be that his apology right now wasn't enough? But that didn't seem to be the case as Eve sent him a bizarre gaze then turned around.

"You can speak to me later if you have something else to tell me. Since it looks like you have your circumstances as well."

Eve left after leaving behind one more word.

"Then please apologize properly to Ara Haan as well."

"....."

Add sighed as Eve's footsteps got further. Apologize again? Add made a tired expression and stared at Ara who was sitting beside him.

"I'm glad Ms.Eve was able to accept your apology."

"So I just have to apologize to you now.....?"

Ara's face suddenly turned deep red.

"Y, You don't have to speak about that."

"You're the one that kept bugging me to apologize....."

Wasn't she the one that nagged him so much about how he should say everything he did wrong in every last detail? But it seemed Ara's face flushing right now wasn't because of the campfire.

"T, That's different from this."

"...."

Add didn't know how it was different.... But then there shouldn't be any reason to talk about this anymore right? It was good if he didn't have to apologize anymore.

Finally able to get a breather, Add angrily glared at Ara. Seeing Add's furious gaze, Ara cowered and nervously stared at Add.

She was completely different from how she was scolding him earlier.

"W, Why are you looking at me like that?"

"Just call Eun out."

Add had business with Eun, not Ara. He was going to grab Eun by the collar and shake her until she spat out why she made him suffer through all this.

What if it was a simple mistake? Then he'll educate her so that she never makes this kind of mistake again.

"How does Mr.Add know about Lord Eun?"

"...."

Ara blinked her eyes in surprise. Oh, was this before Ara revealed about Eun in this timeline?

It was annoying to explain so Add waved his hand.

"You can listen to why later, just bring Eun out. Tell her I have something to say to her."

"She's saying she's tired."

“....”

That sly thing is seriously making him angry. Ara got scared and cowered after seeing Add's gaze turn even more intimidating.

“Uuuu, don't stare at me so scary like that, Mr.Add.”

“Tell her to get out here right this instant. If she doesn't....”

Add brought his Dynamos close to him so he could use them if he needed to. But he couldn't decide on his next course of action. Ara got scared and nervously looked at Add who was steaming with anger.

What should he do if Eun stubbornly refuses to come out? Did he have to torture Ara?

“....”

No, he couldn't stay in the El Search Party anymore if he did something like that. And help of Eun who could determine the Time Space Coordinates was a must to time travel properly.

Torturing Ara wouldn't gain him anything. He would lose more instead.

“Tch, just why do I....”

“If you have something you want to tell Lord Eun I'll relay it for you instead.”

Ara carefully spoke out. But she immediately shrunk and looked towards the ground after seeing Add shoot back an enraged gaze.

There was no sign of Ara who was sternly scolding Add earlier about apologizing to Eve anymore. Well, this was more like the Ara Add had known.

“There's no use talking to you. Can't you pull out that wily beast by force somehow?”

“Lord Eun isn't a wily beast! She's a Celestial Spirit!”

No, that wasn't the issue right now. But it seemed it was an important issue for Ara as she was now staring at him seriously.

“Celestial Spirit or wily beast or whatever....if you don't pull her out right now....”

“Treating me like some object you pull out from a pocket. That's so harsh, boy.”

Ara's tone seemed to change and her hair suddenly got dyed white. Her hairpin was pulled out even before Add could realize it and her eyes were now dyed in red.

And those pointy fox ears on top of her head. They were the final evidence that told Add exactly who he was speaking to.

“I know you’re impatient but wasn’t that discourteous? Treat me more preciously, boy.”

“I don’t think you’re in any position to run your mouth like that.”

Add grinded his teeth as he surrounded Ara, no, Eun with his Dynamos. He could rip her apart if he increased the output. But Eun didn’t seem to care and touched the Dynamos with a curious expression.

White fingers played around rhythmically on top of the Dynamos.

“Just what are you thinking doing something like this? I time traveled because you told me to and I end up like this?”

“I showed you something good. Shouldn’t you be thanking me, boy?”

So dropping him in middle of girls bathing wasn’t an accident. It was on purpose. Add was so dumbfounded that he couldn’t even get angry.

“What? Did boy like bare male bodies better? Alright, I’ll make such arrangements next time.”

“I’m not trying to say worthless things like that.”

“Which would you like better? Male around your age or older?”

Add just shut his mouth when Eun started to act insidiously. He knew that she was making fun of him.....but.

“Why did you do this? Why did you send me to this time specifically? What kind of clue am I supposed to find here?”

Eun probably didn’t plot this just to tease Add. Eun, from the beginning, was expressing her desire to cooperate with him.

Although she didn’t give any proper information and was very suspicious, she had never failed in regards to time travel. At least this much was trustworthy.

When Add asked seriously, Eun stopped fooling around and made a captivating smile.

“Because what boy does from now on is important for accomplishing what he desires. That’s why I especially chose this time.”

“Then what should I do now?”

Add had originally intended to time travel and erase the fact that he had seen on the girls bathing..... But it looked like there was no reason to do so now since the situation has somewhat been resolved.

There shouldn’t be any problem with continuing like this.

“You always can ask me if you want to peep on them bathing again.”

“I don’t need such thing. We’re talking about Eve right now.”

“It seems boy hasn’t felt anything from this incident.”

Feel? What? Add stared at her questioningly but Eun didn’t answer right away and just made a strange expression.

Feeling that flashed by her face for an instant was....disappointment.

This startled Add but he still responded sarcastically.

“What? Was I supposed to write a written report about that?”

“Of course if boy did such things I’d play along as well.....”

Just what was Eun aiming for? Add was about to ask but Eun abruptly changed the subject.

“The key to resolving this situation is approaching right now.”

“What?”

Surprised, Add looked around and heard footsteps approaching. It didn’t sound like footstep’s owner wanted to hide their approach.

Add instinctively brought his Dynamos near him. A key that can help him protect Eve? Add didn’t know who it was but he might have to suppress the person by force.

Should he just ambush the person right now?

While Add pondered while in battle position, the owner of the footsteps revealed himself.

“You still haven’t finished talking?”

“.....”

Add blinked his eyes vacantly after seeing the person. This guy that Add felt like he had seen somewhere before spoke to him with a voice that he felt like he had heard somewhere before.

“You, who are you?”

“Didn’t I introduce myself yesterday? I’m Elsword.”

Red haired boy revealed his name without any hesitation. Add unconsciously let out a sigh. He couldn’t believe this no matter how much he stared at the boy. But since he didn’t disappear, Add had to admit he was real.

“....Why did he get bigger?”

A boy 2 years older than the Elsword Add knew was staring at Add questioningly.

Chill went down Add's spine and dry sweat started to drop down from him. Frightened, Add blankly stared at Elsword.

"They told me to clean this place up since we have to prepare to sleep now. Want me to help?"

"...."

"Big brother Add?"

When Elsword called his name bluntly, Add finally came to his senses and shook his head widely. Elsword's appearance didn't change no matter how much Add closed and opened his eyes.

There was still some of the earlier childishness on the boy's face. But he had become taller and more mature. Well, he aged by two years from Elsword he knew. So that should be obvious... probably.

Confirmation comes first. Add approached Elsword abruptly and thoughtlessly reached out his hand.

"Big brother Add?"

"Stand still."

After shutting Elsword up in a low voice, Add tried flipping Elsword's eyelid. He then confirmed the feelings of his ears and face..... The target wasn't a ghost or an illusion.

"Next is...."

Just what made this possible? Add spoke seriously after feeling various places on Elsword's body.

"I'll have to examine more. Take off your clothes."

"....Umm, did you eat something wrong?"

"I'm not joking right now. Take them off."

Add had to do some confirmation analysis in order to check if this person in front of him was really Elsword. This would be a much easier process if he had kept Elsword's blood sample. But since Add didn't, he had to resort to more primitive method.

Add grabbed Elsword's clothes. Elsword blinked confusingly with a startled expression. Explaining things to Elsword would be a waste of time. He wouldn't understand anyways.

"If you won't take them off, then I'll take them off for you. Cooperate quietly."

Just when Add was about to take Elsword's top off.... A sudden shock fell down on Add's head.

Bam! Bam!

Not just one but two strikes in a row. These strikes were so powerful that tear almost came out from Add's eyes. Add grabbed his head with both of his hands and dropped down. It hurt so much that he couldn't even scream.

"Big brother Add, are you okay?"

"Don't worry. Boy was just confused and was doing something nonsensical. I would like you to forget about this Elsword."

Eun who had just hit Add's head with handle of her spear explained to Elsword leisurely.

"Big sister Ara? Why did your hair color change?"

He's so quick to ask. Add thought internally while still with busy rubbing his aching head.

It seemed Eun hadn't revealed her identity yet to the rest of the El Search Party members.... Just how was she going to resolve this?

"My hair turns like this if I become very angry."

"Ah, so Big brother Add made you angry."

You actually believe that? Add still couldn't speak but was taken aback. But Eun neatly finished up the conversation.

"Then I'll return with the boy after he comes back to his senses. Go back first and tell the others that."

"Alright, I will. Don't cause any more trouble Big brother Add."

Elsword spoke calmly then turned around. Add groaned in pain as he brought himself up after seeing Elsword's back move further away.

"Just what was that.....?"

"You tried to take another man's clothes off but now your prey is escaping."

"Stop with the nonsense. Just what the heck happened?"

"Well I guess he isn't a complete stranger. To be like that with Elsword who you've only met yesterday. You're rather quick."

Eun didn't seem like she was going to answer him properly. Add rubbed his aching head as he organized the situation. Elsword's sudden growth and how Elsword was acting as if nothing was wrong.

“Could it be.....?”

There was only one thing that came into Add’s mind. Add hoped his guess was wrong and asked Eun for confirmation.

“Did Elsword change like that because I time traveled?”

“He did not change, he grew.”

That’s the same thing no matter how you put it.

A chill went down Add’s spine and he couldn’t speak. There were couple of times where insignificant events from the past had changed whenever Add time traveled to prevent Eve from being destroyed.

But for Elsword to age so suddenly like this... This wasn’t something that could be just glossed over.

“Me time traveling and Elsword’s growth doesn’t have any logical correlation. How is this possible?”

“Time isn’t something that logical in the first place. Does the world ever always move as one wants?”

Eun wagged her fingers as she smiled.

“Because Elsword had grown up so much in both body and skill, the business from earlier today was taken care of quickly. Banthus couldn’t even exchange one blow with Elsword and ran away. We were also able to destroy the Nasod army that appeared after much easily. So naturally, time to clean up came much faster and time for bathing also became faster.”

“....”

“Didn’t everything turn out well?”

Contrary to Eun’s words, her smile was very cold and cynical. Finally realizing what was going on, Add tried to put the pieces together.

Everyone including Elsword was treating Elsword’s growth as if it was something obvious. As if Elsword was like this from the start.

A large change happened to the past because Add time traveled.

“....Did you make me time travel for this purpose?”

“I won’t say that I had no such reasons”

After confirming his guess was right, Add recalled the image of Elsword he had just seen now. His body had gotten larger and he seemed more mature than before. He was definitely different from the time when he was a brat. He now looked like he could handle one person’s weight.

“I’ll admit that Elsword became stronger than before. But what meaning does that have? Even if he grew, he’s still weaker than me.”

You could tell with a single glance that Elsword had become stronger than before. But he was probably still weaker than Add. Maybe stronger or equal to Add who had just joined the El Search Party....

But Elsword was no match for Add who had now become stronger from his time travels.

And even the now stronger Add was not confident he could fend off the demons that were after Eve.

“I’m not saying I’ll leave everything to Elsword. No matter how he has grown, it would be too much for him to handle all the demons by himself.”

Then why did you make me come back to this time? Eun made a beaming smile at Add’s questioning gaze.

The girl made a seductive smile. She looked extremely beautiful with the darkness behind her back. But she was letting off a very ominous atmosphere which surpassed her beauty.

“I’ll explain the method starting now so listen well. It sounds simple but it’s actually very difficult to accomplish.”

Finally, the main topic. Add tensed up as he focused on Eun’s next words.

He had to suffer through this timeline even getting accused of being a molester. But he’ll break through any hardships to come with his teeth clenched tightly and finally save Eve this tim....

“Become a woman, boy.”

That’s physically impossible.

“You might as well become an elegant woman.”

Eun made an excited smile towards Add who stood frozen on the spot.

2. Engage

Elder.

El Search Party tracked Banthus who ran off with the El to Elder. El Search Party members were all baffled at Elder's bustling streets that was incomparable to Ruben's.

“Wow that castle is huge.....”

“Ms.Rena! May I go buy some drinks?”

“Yea sure, do you want some too Eve?”

“I’m not particularly interested.”

“Cherry aid is fine right?”

“....I’ll request lemonade please.”

El Search Party members harmoniously exchanged conversations as they walked through the bustling streets. Only Add was not moving his mouth amongst them.

His mind was in such disarray that nothing came into his eyes.....

“Ah, cold!”

Add got startled and stepped back as he felt sudden chill on his cheek.

Rena had brought a juice towards Add’s cheek and was making a beaming smile.

“Here, take this. It’s a cherry aid. You didn’t say anything so I chose what to get.”

“Who said I wanted to drink?”

“Then would you like me to go exchange it for a different flavor?”

Add couldn’t resist anymore and took the drink after seeing Rena hold out the cup towards him with sociable smile. He’s been wondering about this for a while.....Rena was always treating him like a kid she had to take care of.

Of course, Rena paid attention to the other members as well. But it was certain that she was extra attentive towards Add. Well, it was probably because Add kept trying to keep himself in the outskirts of the group.

Add took a glance at the other three with a straw in his mouth. Ara, Elsword and Eve were drinking their juices while sitting and talking to each other harmoniously.

Elsword and Eve had been traveling together so it was obvious they got along. But Ara was quite sociable as well so she had a decent relationship with the other members.

“Sigh....”

Add let out a sigh as he looked at the three of them, particularly Elsword.

Other members didn’t seem bothered at all by Elsword’s sudden growth.

Elsword, 15 years old. He was participating in the El Search Party as Velder Kingdom’s knight.

“Kukukuk.”

Time travel he performed thoughtlessly had caused such a drastic change. It was actually quite frightening. He couldn’t tell what might change next if he time traveled again.

El Search Party’s total battle strength did go up because of Elsword’s growth. But there was no certainty that changes that will happen next were positive.

Add had thought he could erase all unfavorable events by using time travel until now....

“As I thought, it’s not something you can use carelessly.”

Although Eun determined the time space coordinates for him, a huge undesirable change could happen if he continued like this. As he thought, he should refrain from using time travel much as possible...

Grab!

Add was deep in thought while drinking his juice when he felt his body suddenly getting pulled. Add turned around in surprise to see that Rena was smiling with her arm tied around Add’s neck.

“Why are you making such a gloomy face?”

“G, Get off!”

Add got startled by the soft sensation of her breasts on his back and quickly tried to pull his body out. But Add’s physical abilities were that of a normal boy. There was no way he could escape the grasp of Rena who was an Elf warrior.

It stuck closer the more he struggled.

“You should just go talk to them if you want to play together.”

“Who said I wanted to play!? Don’t stick so close to me!!”



““G, Get off!”

Add got startled by the soft sensation of her breasts on his back and quickly tried to pull his body out.”

Add got flustered as he abruptly turned his head around. He could smell indescribably good aroma from Rena....his head started to feel dizzy.

It seemed Rena didn't care about what was going on in Add's head and continued to ask while sticking close to Add's back.

"Hmm, so were you able to apologize well yesterday?"

"....It's all done. You can go check if you're doubtful."

"I was asking if you were able to ease your mind."

Rena finally let go her arm that was tied around Add's neck. Add hastily organized his crumpled clothes then noticed Rena's gaze as he frowned.

For him to get so flustered from something like this; it felt displeasing because it felt like he had shown signs of weakness to her.

"So do you have some business with me?"

"Umm, I'll go talk with Mr.Hoffman now. So please do a good job of watching over the kids for me will you?"

Rena was trying to hand over the command of the group to Add. Well, Add was the most trustworthy one amongst this group when Rena wasn't here.

Eve was fine in every respect but wasn't knowledgeable about worldly affairs, Ara tried her best in everything she did but was unreliable because she was clumsy. Elsword was the youngest among the group.

In Add's case, his weakness was that he was bad with personal relations..... But Rena thought highly of his unexpectedly sensible thought process and ability to improvise.

It was a selection Rena had put various thoughts into. But against Rena's expectations, Add didn't accept the leader role and,

"Wait a moment."

did not decline it either.

"If you're going to meet with Hoffman, I'll go too."

"Hmm?"

Rena glanced at him quizzically but this was something Add had decided on beforehand.

"I have something to suggest to him so I'll go too."

And knowing Rena's personality, she won't deliberately refuse this. Add resolved himself as he waited for her reply.

I'll change the future.

And I'll do anything in order to do so.

In the end, Rena and Add headed to Hoffman's house while leaving the command of the other members to Eve.

"Mr.Hoffman will meet you soon."

A servant guided the two to the guest room then lightly bowed before going away.

Add fidgeting his fingers then stole a glance at Rena. Rena noticed Add's gaze and smiled benevolently in return.

"What's wrong?"

"No, it's just...."

He already knew from past experience that Rena would listen to him even if he made an abrupt request like this. But it still felt uncomfortable.

"What I'm about do to.....is to not make anyone cry."

"Yea, alright."

Rena replied with a tone that said she was listening. It was a light response but her voice was friendly.

"So trust me...and let me take care of this."

"Yea okay."

Rena lightly nodded as if to tell Add that he didn't need to speak any further. She had entrusted Add with this task even though he didn't give her any further explanation.

"....."

Rena will probably just kindly reply back if Add tried to nitpick at her naïve reaction right now. Add had been really confused by Rena's naïve methods before....but he could somewhat accept it now.

Let's do what he had to do now since Rena entrusted him with this.

"Welcome, I'm Hoffman."

Finally, the door opened and a well looking middle aged man came inside the room. Rena came to meet Hoffman in order to investigate Banthus' whereabouts. But Add's purpose was different.

"I came here because I got a proposition for you."

"Proposition? Who are you people?"

"Oh, we're the El Search Party. Here's the letter of recommendation from Ruben's chief, Hagus."

Rena pulled out Ruben chief Hagus' recommendation letter and handed it over to Hoffman. They had heard Hoffman was a close friend of Hagus. This letter should have special meaning to Hoffman.

As expected, Hoffman looked at Rena with a trusting gaze after reading Hagus' letter.

"So you're here to get back the El that was stolen from Ruben. Then...."

"We'll put that aside for now."

Add boldly cut off Hoffman's words and took a deep breath before moving on to the main topic.

Hoffman didn't get angry at Add cutting off his words and carefully stared at Add. Rena smiled as if nothing was wrong.

"We, the El Search Party will help Elder's citizens in overthrowing the tyrannical castle's lord Wally."

"Hmm? What are you saying all of a sudden?"

"Kukuk, you don't have to play dumb. We already know everything. Not only is he issuing unreasonable taxes, he captured all of the girls in this town right? Isn't resentment amongst the citizens sky high already? Didn't you already form a militia and is waiting for an opportune moment?"

Hoffman winced when Add hit the mark. But he didn't get flustered and reacted in a composed manner. It was no wonder why people of Elder trusted him.

"I don't know how you found out....but it seems you already know everything."

"Yes, how we found out isn't important. We'll help you guys so you guys help us in return."

Hoffman didn't respond immediately to Add's suggestion but it seemed he was drawn by this proposition. His good friend Hagus had already approved of the El Search Party's skills.

This was a desperate time where they were preparing for their revolution to overthrow Wally. Each and every help mattered greatly. There was no reason to refuse when the El Search Party was volunteering to help.

"Then how should we help?"

“Our request is simple. Help us get into Wally’s castle.”

“We know about an Underground Waterway that leads into the castle....”

“That’s not it. There’s absolutely no point in going that way.”

Doing so will only repeat the previous events. He had to aim for a different location, attack from a completely unexpected angle.

“We have to infiltrate deep into the castle. Only then can we rescue the captive girls.”

“Of course we’ll be extremely grateful if you can do that....”

Hoffman’s words trailed as if such a thing was impossible. It seemed he had pondered every possible rescue plans but couldn’t manage to come up with anything.

But Add grinned with satisfaction.

“There’s a great way to rescue them easily. That is....”

“That is?”

Rena who was listening also looked like she was very looking forward to Add’s answer. Add couldn’t turn things back anymore if he said this.

Add gulped and revealed his secret plan.

“Girls from us El Search Party will get captured and get taken into the castle. They obviously won’t hold all the girls in separate places and keep them all together. We will pretend to get captured and cause a disturbance from within to rescue the girls. Kukukuk, it’s a perfect plan.”

“Ohhh....”

Hoffman exclaimed as he looked at Rena. They couldn’t use this plan because all the girls in Elder were captured.

But if the El Search Party that had just arrived in Elder, more precisely the girls in their party pretended to be captured and then carry out the rescue from inside...

This plan was worth a try.

“I understand. We’ll pretend to be obedient to Wally and notify the castle that we have captured couple of traveling girls. We’ll prepare this plan right away. How many amongst you are planning to go?”

“Umm, there will be three.”

Rena also accepted this plan and answered. Ara, Rena and Eve were girls so that number was accurate but...

“There will be four.”

“Huh? But Add? There are only three girls amongst us.”

Rena made an obvious indication....but Add continued his words while suppressing the feeling of wanting to vomit out blood. He knew this choice was going to ruin his life but he still couldn't afford to keep himself out of this plan.

“I'm going too!”

“.....Add, could it be that you were a girl?”

Rena asked earnestly and Hoffman also carefully scanned Add. Awkward reactions continued but Add just spoke the words he had to.

He leapt through time determined to do anything in order to save Eve from the Demons. He couldn't back out just because it was shameful.

“I'll become a girl starting from now!!”

.....Although it felt like he'll kick in his sleep later.

Elder's Inn.

Rena gathered the El Search Party members and started explaining with a lighthearted voice.

“Okay then, now I'll explain the plan.”

Other members who didn't know the situation listened carefully to Rena's explanation. But Add had his face facing towards the ground with a sour taste in his mouth. It felt so shameful that he didn't want to be sitting in this conversation.....But he had to supplement Rena's explanation whenever they weren't enough.

Everyone had to work in unison in order for this plan that Eun had suggested to work properly.

“That's all. Is there any questions?”

“Big sister Rena? What about Banthus?”

Elsword asked an obvious question. They had come to Elder in order to find Banthus. But now they were putting aside Banthus and were trying to overthrow castle's lord Wally. Of course he wouldn't be able to understand.

“No, if Mr.Castle’s lord is really a pervert that likes to throw obscene parties with captured girls then I cannot forgive him no matter what!”

“I agree with that too.... But doesn’t finding the El come first?”

The two’s opinions seemed to clash so Add explained instead of Rena.

“The El Banthus stole has already gone into Wally’s hands.”

“What? Really?”

“Banthus was hired by Wally in the first place. Didn’t you think that it was strange how such a small fry was commanding Nasods? There’s also a reason for them in taking all the girls by force. They seem to be plotting something by joining hands with the demons. We cannot let this be.”

Add’s explanation made sense but there was a hole.

“How do you know all this?”

Eve didn’t miss that hole and asked quietly.

It would obviously look suspicious if Add acted like he knew everything that was going on in Elder when it hasn’t even been a day since they’ve arrived here.

“I had bad relations with demons since long ago. I found out when I was researching various things about them.”

“....”

Eve didn’t look satisfied with this explanation. Well, it should still be more convincing than telling her he knew because he was time traveling.

“Hmm, we can’t leave the tyrannical lord like this right? Let’s help Elder’s citizens.”

Everyone nodded when Rena made her decision. Attacking Wally first while leaving Banthus aside felt like the orders got flipped, but everyone accepted because Rena had said so.

“Then what should we do? Shall we go right now?”

“I’ll lead the way!”

Ara grabbed her spear and got up immediately. She had become extremely enraged after hearing Wally’s evil deeds and was now raring to go.

“I’ll help too. We need to get the El back after all.”

“Wait, I have a plan.”

It was good that everyone was willing. But charging in like this will only end with the same result from last time.

Add repeated the same explanation he gave to Hoffman while ignoring Rena who was making a bitter smile.

“That’s a great plan! I’ll do it too!”

“I don’t mind as well....but why is there 4 people?”

Eve spoke questioningly.

“T, That’s because....”

Add quickly made his move first before Rena who was forcefully suppressing her laughter while trying to reveal the truth.

He’d rather say it himself than let someone else say it!

“I’m going too. By becoming a girl.”

“....”

“....”

Eve coldly, and Ara confusingly stared at Add. After staring at Add’s chest for a while, Ara asked in a tone as if she couldn’t understand at all.

“But Mr.Add doesn’t have breasts. Were you a girl?”

“....”

Eve’s face seemed to stiffen for some reason but let’s ignore that. Add suppressed the feeling of wanting to burrow into the ground and forced out his words.

“I, I’ll disguise myself and go together.”

“Ah, so you’re disguising yourself like a girl!”

Ara clapped her hand and made a large nod.Please don’t show such a welcoming reaction; I’m going to die from embarrassment.

“....Big brother Add, will you be okay?”

Elsword asked with the eyes that were looking at a pitiable person. Add nodded with his teeth clenched tightly. Add started to feel increasingly more wretched the more he talked.

“Okay.... I just have to stand ready outside with the militia right?”

Elsword finished up the conversation with a tone that meant he won't talk about this anymore. Right now, this kind of reaction was more grateful for Add.

"What should we do to make them believe Mr. Add is a girl?"

"C, Can't we just put some r, ribbons on his head? Pfft."

"You look like you're having fun, Rena."

Three girls started to have an in-depth discussion about the sudden topic of dressing Add up like a girl. Their atmosphere felt like they were enjoying this.... Add hoped this was just his imagination.

"I don't know much about decorating but I'll do my best!"

"I'm not too knowledgeable about adorning but I'll give it a try."

"I, I'll.... Make you pretty too. Pfft."

Just laugh out loud if you want to laugh. Add made a huge sigh seeing the three girl converse in front of him.

"We should give him big breasts. Since he's pretty tall."

"It would be best if we gave him a skirt right?"

"We need a wig."

.....My heart is seriously getting torn apart listening to this.

Add couldn't handle the girls harmoniously talking about dressing him up anymore and returned to the guys' bedroom. He kept getting impulses to turn back and erase this event even though he was the one that had brought it up.

Add moved out to the balcony and looked up at the sky while grabbing the railings. The sky was very dark and perfectly reflected his feelings right now.

"Kukuk, this isn't funny."

Seriously? cross-dressing? It was such an absurd plan. Add had opposed it when he first heard it from Eun too. But he ended up agreeing to it after listening to her explanation.

To protect Eve, Add who knew about the situation had to be beside her. Then why couldn't they just send only Rena and Ara to the Wally's Castle?

That won't be any different from the time when Ran appeared and destroyed Eve.

The back bone of Eun's plan was that the battle occurred when much of the party members were together as possible.

Thus, it was better for Eve to get taken along with Rena and Ara....and Add had to be beside Eve as well. Thus, he had to dress up like a girl in order to do so.

He extremely disliked this plan but couldn't deny it logically.

"It totally feels like I've been fooled....."

"It's a proper for guys to allow themselves to get fooled by girls."

Add winced at the sudden voice that came from below him. Tap! Ara who jumped up from the bottom floor's balcony grabbed onto the railings and pulled herself into the upper floor's balcony.

It was an unbelievable physical feat. But the girl who now suddenly stood beside him shrugged when Add gave her a surprised stare.

"Even Ara can easily perform this much."

White hair that waved from the wind, fox ears that curled up and down, it was Eun, not Ara.

"You're popping up too often recently."

"I'll switch if you have a business with Ara."

"Just tell me what you came here to say."

Eun was the one that told Add about this plan in the first place. She probably came out to explain the tomorrow's plan in more detail.

"I'll be awaiting your pretty form tomorrow."

"Get lost, don't ever come out again."

Eun burst out laughing when Add bared his teeth and got angry.

"I was joking. The problem is how we'll fool the castle's soldiers."

"It will work out somehow. It's not like they're taking girls based on their appearance."

"It could be troublesome if there's a guy who falls for you because you're so beautiful."

"Go back this instant if you came out to say such garbage!"

Eun laughed enjoyably as Add glared at her. In some sense, Eun was much more difficult to face than Rena.

"What will you do if you fail tomorrow?"

“I won’t fail.”

“Still, just in case. What will you do if you were to fail?”

Add frowned when Eun questioned him persistently. He didn’t know why she was trying to confirm this.

“I’ll find you and time travel again. Is there a problem with that?”

“Aren’t you afraid of.....what might happen if you time travel again?”

Add couldn’t answer immediately to her quiet question. Elsword’s sudden change. Would Add have decided to time travel so lightly if he had known about this change beforehand?

His time travel started bringing about a strange phenomenon. It was light changes at first, but now it had completely changed a person.

Something even more serious could happen next.

“You’ll just have to tell me what will happen next. Didn’t you send me knowing full well that Elsword would change like this?”

“I said I’d help the boy. I never said I’d tell him everything. I don’t intend to reveal what will happen when you time travel.”

“.....”

“You look like you want to ask me why. But I won’t answer that either.”

But Add could somewhat understand Eun’s calculations.

If Add heard beforehand about how something even more serious, something even more drastic than Elsword’s change might happen.....It could make Add give up time traveling.

“So your goal was to make me time travel.”

“My goal is to resolve this situation. Making boy time travel if necessary.”

Eun didn’t deny Add’s guess.

In the end, it meant that Eun knew how Add would despair after seeing Eve be destroyed in front of his eyes then repeatedly time travel only to fail. Yet she didn’t do anything and just observed as all of this happened.

It honestly made Add angry....but there was no point in getting mad right now. Didn’t he already assume that this thing had its own agenda?

“Forget it. I’ll succeed for sure tomorrow.”

“If need be, I’ll also help both physically and spiritually.”

Eun smiled without a constraint but Add couldn’t let his guard down. They were cooperating for now but as he had thought, she was way too suspicious.

Eun shrugged at Add’s angry glare and grabbed the railings to throw herself downwards.

“Then I’ll be anticipating boy’s beautiful form tomorrow.”

Eun fell down before Add could retort. There was no need to check. She probably landed on the bottom floor’s balcony safely.

“I don’t like this.”

He was playing into that fox’s hands right now. But he had no other options at the moment. He’ll just have to be patient and make this plan successful.

“I don’t want to do this ever again....”

He just hoped that the girls talking so excitedly about dressing him like a girl didn’t bring about some hideous result. Add prayed to the stars in the night sky.

Next day morning.

The stars were heartless. They don’t listen to people’s wishes.

“It fits you.”

“You look great Mr.Add!”

“Hmm, you look better than I expected.”

Add bit his lower lip as the three girls complimented him. He didn’t even want to imagine what miserable form he had right now.

A skirt came into his view when he lowered his eyes. Although Add had agreed with dressing up like a girl, he protested desperately against wearing a skirt.... But his height was the problem.

Add’s height was 176cm. Tall for a girl. This will obviously attract attention so they had to make this disguise believable as possible and Rena’s opinion was that just disguising the breasts wasn’t enough. Add couldn’t logically refute her.

“Is it....over?”

“Here, want to take a look in the mirror?”

“No, no matter what.”

Add spoke with a grave look. He never wanted to confirm how he looked right now with his own eyes.

“That won’t do Add, you have to make sure nothing is wrong with your own eyes.”

“I changed your voice so you don’t need to worry about getting found out.”

“Okay Mr.Add, stand still.”

When Add kicked the ground and tried to escape from the room, Ara grabbed Add by locking him down by brining both of her arms from under his armpits. He couldn’t move and....her breasts were touching his back!

“Hey, hey! I’ll look! So let go! Let go of me!!”

“Eh? What’s wrong Mr.Add?”

“I said I’ll look!!”

Panicked Add finally managed to shake Ara off by twisting his body. Add let out a big sigh then looked inside the wall mirror although he really didn’t want to.

A girl he had never seen before in his life stared back at him with a frown.

She was a girl anyone would look back at if they saw her passing by in the streets. Even Add who had no particular interest in girls admitted this internally.

.....The problem was that this girl was him.

“It was really fun to do. This doesn’t look bad at all since Add was already pretty.”

“It’s excellent.”

“Yes, no one will be suspicious.”

“Are we done now? Then contact Hoffman already. Tell him to bring the castle’s soldiers here.”

Add notified the girls lopsidedly and got out of the room. He’d only become a laughingstock the longer he stayed in there.

“....This is driving me crazy.”

It was something he had determined to do but actually doing it had a different weight. Add carefully moved his steps, watching out so he didn’t step on the bottom of his skirt.



The problem with this plan of girls in the El Search Party getting captured was how they were going to secretly bring their weapons. Unlike Add who had physical abilities of a normal boy, the other girls were quite powerful even without their weapons. But you never know what's waiting for them inside the castle.

When others couldn't give any particular solutions, Add solved the issue by using an area specific optical camouflage. Put the Dynamos inside a large bag then put all of the group's weapons inside. Then make the bag invisible.

There won't be any problems long as no one touched the bag directly. All preparations done.

"....They are late."

Add clicked his tongue after coming down to the inn's first floor because he didn't want to be with the others. Sidelong glances of the inn's guests that came in and went really annoyed him. Especially how the group of men that just arrived were staring at him with wide eyes.

He would have blown them away under normal circumstances. But he was right now disguised as a frail girl in order to be captured. He couldn't cause a scene until the soldiers arrived.

'.....Do girls always get these kinds of stares from guys?'

He had to withstand all of these stares until he could achieve his goal. Add was busy suppressing his boiling rage....when a young man sat across from him without any permission.

Who the heck is this? The man smiled and held out his hand towards Add. Add was already in an unsatisfactory mood so he glared at the man.

"Beautiful lady, may I join you?"

"....Get lost."

Let's never cross-dress again even if this plan fails and he had to time travel again. Add thought as he refused the man while grinding his teeth. But the man just smiled in return.

"My, it seems what they said about beautiful roses having thorns were true."

"....."

Wow that just gave me goose bumps. Add was trying to focus on suppressing himself while shivering in disgust, then the man abruptly grabbed Add's wrist.

Add was now beyond shivering and was about to have a seizure. Add got startled and tried to pull his hand out but the man grabbed on tightly and didn't let go.

"My, lady your wrist is beautiful too."

Add couldn't win in a contest of physical strength. The man's tone had become impolite before long.

Sound of whistles.

"Mac! Don't treat the lady so roughly!"

"Hahaha!"

For some reason, cheers rang across the floor as if the man did something cool. There was no one around to help Add and the man in front of him was trying to be overly familiar by relying only on his physical strength.

Come to think of it, disguise or whatever...did he really have to take this? Wasn't it more natural to cause a ruckus in town and get captured instead?

"Kukukuk...."

Add stole a look at the bag that lay near his feet and at the Dynamos inside. He then stretched out his other hand and put it on top of the man's hand.

"Oh? Do you feel like talking now lady? You should tell me your name first."

"I'll tell you. If you still got a head to remember."

Just when Add smiled viciously and was about to move the Dynamos....a familiar hand slightly pressed on Add's shoulder.

As if to tell him to be patient.

"Do you have some business with my younger sister?"

Rena was standing behind Add. The man was too focused on trying to hit on Add that he was late in noticing Rena's presence. The man's face turned red soon as he looked up.

"Ah, that's...."

"I'm sorry but people from the castle will come soon. Could you come later if you have some business with us?"

"F, From the castle....?"

The man winced in surprise then got up from his spot and hurriedly left the inn. The man's friends that had been standing still out of their minds due to Rena's beauty also stopped staring and left quickly.

Rena sat across from Add where the man was sitting before after resolving this situation.

"You did well in holding back, Add."

“....I could have handled it by myself.”

Rena smiled brightly when Add muttered back.

“Hmm, please try to understand those people. They must have been lonely because all the girls in Elder got captured.”

“Why do you always think so positively?”

Add was dumbfounded and couldn’t help but to ask. He knew she was seriously soft hearted.....but wasn’t this too much?

“I would have suppressed him if he didn’t let go. But he listened when I asked right? So they are not that bad people.”

“....”

It was more like they got mesmerized by Rena’s beauty then got scared and ran away when she mentioned the castle. Add tried but still couldn’t make sense of what Rena said.

“You did really well in holding back.”

Add frowned when Rena complimented him again. Rena spoke kindly in response after noticing that Add’s frown was meant to get her to stop talking about this subject.

“You didn’t have to deal with this if you had stayed in our room.”

“....Everyone is getting ready to be captured.”

Add couldn’t stay in that room because Ara and Eve now had to wash and get dressed themselves. Both of them had helped with Add’s disguise soon as they got up this morning.

“What’s wrong with that? Add is also proudly a girl now right?”

“If you say that one more time.....”

Add was about to retort in anger but decided to sigh instead. There was no reason to reply so sharply when Rena was only making a light joke.

“Hmm, what I said before was too much. I’m sorry that we got too carried away.”

Rena admitted her mistake and seriously apologized to Add.

“I know Add is doing this even though he doesn’t want to. This is something very important for you after all.”

“....What do you mean?”

Does she know something? Did Eun tell her? Add went on alert but Rena just smiled calmly.

“Since Add is being so patient and is trying his best I’ll also help the best I can.”

“What am I trying?”

Does she know about him time traveling? Add asked while staring at her suspiciously but Rena continued to reply modestly.

“You’re trying your best despite knowing that this doesn’t suit you. That’s very admirable.”

“....”

I’m totally being treated like a kid. Add clicked his tongue but didn’t deny what she said. From how it seems, Rena must have noticed something just by her wits.

When he continued to keep his mouth shut, Rena stretched out her hand and patted Add’s head.

“There, there you’re a good boy.”

“Don’t treat me like a kid.”

Add got angry and pushed her hand away but Rena continued to smile regardless. He couldn’t stay angry anymore after seeing her smile.

No. Normally, Add should be able to grind anyone’s smiling face....but he somehow couldn’t do that against Rena’s smiling face.

Add sighed and admitted this internally. He didn’t know since when, but he wasn’t able to treat Rena with contempt anymore.

Also just sitting together with her in silence didn’t feel uncomfortable at all.

“Ara thinks you’re admirable too. Eve also.”

“What? Why?”

Add got surprised at such nonsense and asked back. What did he ever do to get that kind of evaluation from them?

“You’re coming with us even resorting to disguising as a girl because you don’t want to send just us frail girls by ourselves right? Of course they’d be touched.”

“....”

That was not what he had intended. Add was at a loss for words....but didn’t bother to correct Rena. Rena will probably think positively of whatever Add said in response.

“Hmph.”

Add made a snort and was about to bring the coffee mug to his mouth, then Rena asked suddenly.

“So who do you like more Add? Eve or Ara?”

“Pfffffttt!!”

Add spat out the coffee he was drinking then started to beat his chest. He managed to avoid getting his attire dirty....but he couldn't stop coughing.

“Oh, are you okay?”

“C, cough. Cough. What the heck are you saying?”

Add glared at Rena with fire in his eyes after wiping his mouth with the hand cloth that Rena handed to him. He couldn't just gloss this over even if it was Rena who had said it.

“Hmm? Could it be that you like me? Ah, knowing that Add likes me makes me happy.”

“....Don't say such nonsense!!”

Add got up abruptly hitting the table and yelled so loud that his voice rang across the entire floor. He was glad no one was in the first floor.

“Hmm, it makes big sis sad when you deny it so seriously like that.”

Add closed his mouth after seeing Rena lower her head with a really depressed expression. He knew Rena had mentioned this only as a joke. But Add yelling in response made the matter serious.

“I, It's not like I hate..... That's....”

“Which is it? Do you hate me? Or like me?”

Add became flustered and couldn't think of how to answer when Rena asked with a sad voice. This was the first time in his life that he was asked this kind of question so he didn't know what to say.

Because he was flustered....Add was late in realizing that Rena's shoulders were lightly shivering. He had first thought it was because she was sobbing. But upon closer inspection, he realized that the end of her mouth was slightly curved upwards.

“....are you laughing right now?”

“P, Pfft. I'm sorry.”

Rena couldn't hold her laugh anymore and openly burst out laughing. Add stared blankly at her not knowing how to react after realizing that he just got made fun of.

“It’s because Add got so flustered.....I couldn’t hold back. Ahaha, are you mad?”

“....Quit it.”

Add made a deep sigh then dropped back on his seat. He was so fed up that he couldn’t get angry anymore.

Rena quietly whispered seeing Add numbly stare up at the ceiling.

“As I thought. Add is a good kid.”

“You’re saying something stupidly soft hearted again....”

Add answered accordingly but Rena was serious this time.

“You actually pondered seriously just now. You did that because you were worried about hurting my feelings right?”

“I just couldn’t answer right away because it was so absurd.”

“Alright. I’ll just remember Add is a good kid by myself.”

Rena’s tone became very soft.

“So please don’t let Ara and Eve, any one of them get hurt during this mission. Got it?”

“I was planning to do so even if you didn’t mention it.”

That was why he had traveled back in time and was enduring dressing up like this in the first place.

“Okay, that puts me at ease.”

“You too....”

Add hesitated if he should say this but his words came out faster than his hesitation.

“You never know what could happen so you should be careful too.”

Rena was the strongest amongst the El Search Party currently. She could probably handle most opponents without letting them ever get close to her.

But their destination was Wally’s Castle. Although it looked like a normal castle from the outside, it was a demonic den where you couldn’t tell what was waiting for you.

“Yes, okay. I’ll be careful so that I won’t worry you Add.”

“It’s not because I’m worried. It’s because I’ll end up taking care of the others if you’re not here and that’s bothersome for me.”

Add purposely made a blunt remark. He could have just left everything to Raven instead if he was here....Why didn't he join up with them already? Just what was he doing in Ruben?

Come to think of it, various changes had happened so far as Add time traveled. Even a drastic change where Elsword suddenly grew up happened. But there were no cases of Raven rejoining the El Search Party.

Raven was equally skilled as Rena. Couldn't they succeed easily if they were able to bring Raven here somehow?

Add had realized this fact and was about to speak....but Rena spoke in a soft tone first.

"Please take care of everyone if such time comes."

"...."

That gentle smile was something that existed in memories of his far past.

Add's numbly stared at Rena's smile. Then his face got contorted. Just when Add was about to instinctively raise his voice, Rena got up as if the conversation right now didn't happen.

"Okay, our guests are here. Let's get ready."

They could hear busy footsteps outside the inn. Soldiers had come to capture the girls that had newly appeared in Elder.

"...."

Add also stood up with a sour taste in his mouth.

Eve, Ara, Rena and cross-dressing Add followed the soldiers and headed to the Wally's Castle. It was protocol to have the captives tied up during this process but they managed not to get tied up because Rena had asked the soldiers politely.

It would just look like some soldiers were protecting couple of girls in the eyes of other people in the streets that didn't know the details.

"Hmph...."

Add snorted unpleasantly. Soldiers were all too busy trying to sneak a side glance at Rena that they were tripping over rocks and hitting their heads after losing grip on their spears....Their military discipline was a mess.

Upon closer inspection....they weren't distracted only because of Rena. Lots of eyes were also focused on Ara who walked quietly with her head down and Eve who was a Nasod also became a large target for attention.

Their gazes were filled with curiosity, admiration and lust.

'....How dare they?'

Add got filled with rage and slowed down his steps. Eve who was walking quietly at the very back of the group stared at Add when he slowed down to walk beside her.

"What is it?"

"It's nothing."

These soldiers would have normally been not even worth a single punch. No, even now he could move the Dynamos inside the bag to blow them all away. Add had to struggle a lot in order to restrain the destructive impulses that boiled up from within him.

'I'll have to be patient for just for little longer....then blow them all way later'

Soldiers got startled when Add angrily glared at them. But then they stared back at him(?). Those stares were kind of like....the same looks they were giving the other girls?

'These imbeciles....'

Did they get fish eyes transplanted to them? When Add let out an angry groan, Eve calmly persuaded Add.

"You can't. Eren, restrain yourself."

"....What?"

A noun that he had never heard before came into his ear.

"I chose it because I thought you'd need an alias. There were other candidates like Ave, Era, Aena, Ari, Adi, and Aru."

He had to change names now? Just because he's disguised as a girl? It made sense although it wasn't too desirable.

Rena should have at least stopped them from coming up with foolish things like this. Add thought as he glared at Rena who was walking lightly at the very front. Seeing Add glare in front of him like this, Eve spoke to Add with a serious tone.

"Certainly, Ara Haan's hips are ideally shaped for having children. It's no wonder why she'd attract attention."

“....”

“Huh? Ehhh?!”

Ara was walking in front of them with her head drooped down when she heard this sudden evaluation come from behind her. She reacted by hopping then covering her hips with both of her hands.

“W, what are you saying?! Ms.Eve!”

“Person beside me was staring at your hips very passionately, Ara Haan.”

“I wasn’t!!”

Although I agree with the opinion.

“M,Mr I mean Ms.Add! That’s so mean!”

Shouldn’t she refrain from addressing him as Add altogether right now? Ara protested as her face turned red but Eve tilted her head in response.

“Isn’t saying you’re ideal for having children a compliment for human females? That’s how I learned it.”

“T, That’s....”

Ara couldn’t seem to figure out what to say and instead stared at Add with a clingy look. Add turned his head around and ignored her as if he didn’t hear anything. He didn’t want to join in this conversation.

But Ara didn’t back down easily.

“Ms.Add! If you stared so intently then please help me explain this to Ms.Eve!!”

“I told you I didn’t!!”

“....Did I say something wrong? Then I apologize. It was actually an unsatisfactory pelvic structure.”

When Eve nodded and corrected her words, Ara’s face turned red even more and she could only repeat the words “Ummm....”.

Soldiers began to stare at them with a curious look when the three’s argument got larger. Since the soldiers didn’t know the details of their conversation, they’d just think that an argument just broke out amongst the three girls.

Ara also must have realized the surrounding gazes because she tightened her hands into fists then stared at her hands with a surprised expression. She must have unconsciously tried to grab her spear.



“Uuuu....”

Add let out a sigh after seeing Ara shake in anxiety for not being able to do anything. Rena who was walking in the front must not have heard this ruckus because she was now taking the leisure to chat with the soldier beside her.

Only Add could resolve this situation.

“It’s rude to give such evaluation to humans.”

“Isn’t it a great compliment to say that you are a superior entity for propagation of your race?”

“Hmm....”

Well what Eve said wasn’t baseless when you thought about it. Wasn’t it an evaluation that said you are a superior individual amongst your race?

Add thought about this for a moment then answered with a serious tone.

“You would be right if you considered the entirety of the human race. But humans value themselves more than the many. Evaluations based on individuals are more important than the evaluations based on entire human race.”

“....Then for example, would Add be fine with me badly evaluating the entire human race?”

“I wouldn’t care about that.”

He wasn’t a person from this age, and even without time travel, Add didn’t have much interest about the evaluation of human race.

But Eve seemed quite shocked at Add’s response and stared back at him with a stiff face. Her gaze started to make him feel uncomfortable.

Just when Add couldn’t stand Eve’s gaze anymore and frowned, Eve made a low sigh then asked Ara.

“Is it the same for you Ara Haan?”

“Um.....No. I’d like to help Ms.Eve understand that there are good things about humans as well.”

“I see. I’m glad.”

Eve heaved a sigh of relief.

“I just found out that there are humans that don’t take pride in their own race.”

“....”

So in the end, I'm the only one that said something bad. Add snorted and purposely slowed his steps. Unwelcome person should read the mood and back off.

But despite how Add slowed down, the fact that Eve was still walking beside him didn't change. Noticing that Eve had also slowed down, Add increased his speed this time.

Even then, the fact that Eve was walking beside him didn't change. She was adjusting her speed to match with Add's.

"Kukukuk. What? Do you have something more to say?"

Add found this difficult to ignore anymore and asked bluntly. Eve stared at Add for a moment then spoke with an indifferent attitude.

"Your view is different from mine but it is also true that Ara Haan was embarrassed by my evaluation. I judge that this is not something where one side is correct and the other is wrong."

Eve slightly lowered her head toward Add.

"So thank you for your explanation."

"I just didn't want to get strange misunderstandings."

Add replied bluntly and stared in front of him only to notice that Ara was gone. He didn't know since when but Ara had moved beside him and was now walking to his left.

"....Why do all three of us have to walk side by side?"

"That's because Ms.Add keeps staring at my, umm, my bottom...."

"I told you I didn't...."

"B, but...."

Add let out a deep sigh after seeing Ara speak so hesitantly while still covering her hips with her hands.

Eun was uncomfortable to deal with in various ways, but Ara was also uncomfortable to deal with in a different sense. Ara was normally a righteous and polite girl but now she looked like she was about to burst into tears at any moment.

Just how is she older than me again....?"

"Do what you like."

After hearing his approval, Ara nodded with a relieved expression as if her worries were finally over. Add ended up getting an undeserved misunderstanding but he didn't bother to explain himself. Ara will forget everything and run around wildly soon as she got her spear back.

In the first place, was looking at her hips while they were still covered by clothes such a big deal? Didn't he accidentally look at her naked already?

But judging by how Ara acted like she had forgotten all about what happened back then, this matter will probably also get treated as if it never happened.

It wasn't just Ara that acted like this....Eve and Rena also had these tendencies.

"Kukuk."

Add let out a laugh before he had realized it himself. Then he noticed there was a gaze directed at him and frowned. Rena who was talking with a soldier in the front was giving Add a slight glance while waving her hand.

"....So she was listening to everything."

To pretend not to hear even though she had noticed the argument back here. Add was at a loss for words but didn't feel like protesting to Rena anymore.

Because the demonic den that threw him down into pit of hopelessness and despair time and time again,

Wally's castle started coming into view.

Wally's Castle.

It looked like the soldiers couldn't afford to keep the four of them unrestrained anymore. So the four's wrists got tied up with ropes after arriving in the castle. Soldiers suddenly seemed very alert because even the smiles of soldiers that had been chatting with Rena had disappeared.

'As I thought, there's something going on in here.'

Add felt doubts after seeing the changed atmosphere of the soldiers. But before Add could figure out what was going on, the group ended up getting confined inside the inner most building.

Slam!!

Add let out a thin sigh after hearing the giant gate slam shut behind him.

"...We're finally here."

"I can only sense two of the Mr.Soldiers outside."

"I've already scanned the surrounding area on our way here."

"Is everyone here all right?"

Upon Rena's enquiry, questions rose up in the eyes of the girls that were already here. This place was a large area that must have been used as an assembly hall. There were over hundreds of young girls inside this hall.

The captive girls let out a thin sigh after looking at their new comrades with a very gloomy expression.

"There's more...."

"Were there people like them in Elder?"

"They must be travelers that had been passing by."

Captive girls that were here before them stared at the group while conversing amongst themselves. Amongst them, a girl with an impressionable blonde hair got up from her spot.

"Hello everyone. I'm Ariel from the COBO service. Welcome..... although I don't think that's appropriate here."

Rena smiled brightly after seeing Ariel make a bitter smile.

"Hello. I'm Rena. Hmm, we came here to rescue all of you."

"Is that true?"

Ariel who came forth as a representative made a surprised expression but the face of the other girls stayed gloomy. It looked like they were listening but weren't expecting much.

Explaining things to them like this will take a long time.

Add brought forth his Dynamos and discharged high intensity electric current thinly as possible. He began to burn away the knot that was tied around his wrist.

Only a small gap the size of one's finger lay between both of his wrists. To burn away the rope that was positioned between this gap required a very high level of skill. He'd burn his own wrist away if he made a mistake in precise output control or made a mistake in area designation.

But Add showed no signs of doubt. Dynamos were basically like an extension of his own hands at this point. There was no way he'd fail in their manipulation.

"Kukukuk."

After realizing what Add was doing, the girls stopped talking amongst themselves and focused on his actions. Gazes showered from all directions but Add didn't lose his focus.

With the sizzling sound of a rope getting burnt off, the knot that was restraining Add's wrists broke away easily. After gathering everyone's attention on him Add stretched out both of his arms to show them.

"Kahaha! Now will you believe that we came to rescue you....?"

Snap!

Ara who was observing Add's method tilted her head then moved both of her arms in opposite direction.

With only that, her ropes snapped off as if they were strings.

"...."

"...."

The girls' eyes opened wide at the much more direct and quicker display than Add's.

Even Add's eyes widened.

"Ah, did I make some kind of mistake?Was I not supposed to take this off now? It was really uncomfortable."

Ara asked Add in a clingy voice while making a very nervous expression. Add was in shock just like the other girls but he came back to his senses and stared at Ara's arms that were now free.

"H, how did you do that?"

"Ah, it's easy. You just have to combine the moment when your breath and body moves. Would Mr.Add like to try as well?"

Ara was looking uneasy before and now she rejoiced as she tried to teach Add. Add shook his head and looked beside him, Eve conjured up knives and instantly cut off her ropes.

"Wha, What?"

"Could she be? Nasod?"

Eve stood still silently as if she was used to all the curious gazes.

When Add finally turned his gaze towards Rena....Rena was also finishing untying her ropes slowly. Unlike the other three, there wasn't even a sign that she used any tricks.

"W, What?"

"How did you do that?"

The girls that were looking at her exclaimed in surprise and Ariel's also raised her voice in surprise as well. Rena spoke as she smiled awkwardly.

"I asked one the soldiers on our way here. So I wasn't actually tied up properly."

"....Ah."

The look of how the girls viewed the El Search Party changed completely. From the helpless hostages that had been captured just like them into heroes that had really come to rescue them.

"Then let's start the talks quickly."

Add let out a blunt voice while ignoring Ara who was untying the parts of his knot that the Dynamos couldn't burn off completely.

He had no reason to maintain his disguise anymore. So Add let Rena and the other members take care of talking to the captive girls while he changed into his original outfit.

"Phew, I finally feel alive."

Add shook his head honestly. He will never do something this insulting again no matter what happened.

Add made a vow to himself and turned around.....then winced at the awkward stares. The eyes of the girls that had been busily discussing the escape plan were now all suddenly fixed on Add.

Add took a step back due to all the gazes that showered upon him like the rain.

"....Wha, What?"

He was the only guy here amongst hundreds of girls. Was it just his imagination or was he feeling very exposed right now?

"Umm, I know our Add is handsome and all, but can we talk about that later? Going home is more important for everyone now right?"

They must have all agreed to Rena's words because the girls regrettably(?) withdrew their gazes on Add. Add who was shedding dry sweat now let out a sigh of relief.

.....He didn't know why but that just now was kind of scary.

"Phew...."

"Are you nervous already? The plan is set to execute during night time."

Eve approached and told Add about how things were proceeding. Rena had gained the other girls' trust and was now coming up with an escape plan.

"It's impossible for the soldiers to not notice us if this many people moves all at once. We should cause a disturbance inside the castle and....."

"You can't."

Add gravely denied this plan. What the El Search Party was trying to do right now was obvious. Add, Ara and Eve grabbed the attention of the soldiers by causing a disturbance while Rena uses that chance to help the hostages escape. It was a very rational plan.

But that won't be any different than the first time they came to the Wally's Castle. Wally Robot will appear again then Shadow Master will appear after.

And there was no guarantee that it will end after those two.

"We have to all move together."

"That's waste of manpower."

Add also admitted Eve's indication. He would have also gladly accepted the current plan if he hadn't known anything.

"There's no use talking with you. I'll go talk with Rena personally."

It would be unreasonably stubborn of him, but Rena will probably accept what Add said if he prepared his words right. Add got up and was about to head towards Rena who was having a discussion with the girls, but stopped his steps.

Eve's gear was floating in front of him.

"You still haven't explained to me why you are acting like this, Add."

"....."

Add couldn't move forwards anymore now that his name was called. He could just walk away ignoring the gear and pretend he had not heard anything, but he couldn't.

"I would like you to explain it to me in a way I can understand."

"....Because it could be dangerous."

It was fine if she didn't believe him. No, he didn't expect her to believe him. He had just wanted to say it. This conversation was a waste of time....but wasn't time something that was abundant to him anyways?

Nothing will change by having couple of meaningless conversations. But there was also no reason not to have those meaningless conversations either.

“There could be something unexpected waiting for us inside this castle. I have a very bad feeling about this place. It’s already strange enough that they captured all these girls and were just keeping them confined here. So Demons might have rigged this place somehow. Since you never know what might happen, to prepare for that....I”

“Understood. I’ll go request Rena for change of plans.”

Eve nodded as if she had understood everything. Add mind numbingly stared blinking as Eve’s back quickly moved further away.

Did that work just now? But only thing she had to go on was that Add had a bad feeling about this place.

A Nasod, that should be making decisions based on reason, is going to believe such baseless words and make changes to the plan? Add stared at Eve as she conversed with Rena but still couldn’t believe his eyes.

“I’ll protect you if you feel uneasy, Mr.Add!”

Hearing Ara speak energetically brought Add to his senses. The event just now was so unexpected that it felt dreamy.

“Strange. Why....did she agree to what I said?”

“That’s because Ms. Eve also knows about Mr.Add’s feelings.”

“My....feelings?”

Add looked beside him with a numb expression. Ara was making a pleasant smile but then her cheeks slowly started to turn red.

“B, because you’re reflecting on your actions from back then and is trying to make amends!”

“What do you mean back then?”

Ara’s face turned even redder when Add asked blankly.

She looked like she couldn’t dare say this out loud. But when Add continued to make an expression as if he didn’t know what she was talking about, Ara spoke in a tiny voice.

“T....The bath.”

“What?”

“I mean....about”

“I can’t hear you.”

When Add asked back vacantly, Ara covered her ears with both of her hands then shouted out loud as she could.

“About that time when Mr.Add p, peeped on us while we were bathing!!”

“....”

Add stiffened at the loud voice that suddenly rang out across the hall. But Ara must have interpreted this as Add not understanding what she shouted and continued to speak.

“When we were bathing!! Mr.Add suddenly appeared and.....Mmh?! mmmphh!!”

“....”

Add instinctively shut Ara’s mouth with his hands. He couldn’t afford to let Ara speak anymore.

The hostages’ gaze towards him seemed to have changed but he could care less.

“I see. So that wasn’t....something meaningless after all.”

Should he say that the misfortune from back then had turned into an advantage? It seemed Add making a mistake and then apologizing, then following the group to the extent of withstanding humiliation must have earned him the party’s trust.

“Kukukuk....”

Well he didn’t care much about their trust. Important thing here was that he was able to create a different result than last time. Add let out a confident laugh.

“Great, very great. This is the best result possible. Kahahaha!”

They were now fully prepared. He didn’t know what kind of enemies might pop up but at least the party’s strength was in top condition right now.

Well, Elsword wasn’t here...but he was still a brat even if he grew up a bit. He would only create variables that could put Eve in danger anyways. It was better for him to be not here.

“I can’t wait for... tonight.”

Finally, his time for revenge had come. Add’s eyes gleamed dangerously.

“Mmmph?!!”

Ara was still struggling for breath after getting her mouth covered up by Add’s forceful hand. Add let his hand go and backed off after finally realizing that he was still covering Ara’s mouth.

She was strong so she could have shaken Add's hands off easily if she had wanted to. Was she really that slow?

"Haah, phaah... i, it was tough not being able to breathe."

Add ignored Ara's sigh and enflamed his fighting spirit. The time to return everything to normal had come.

He'll destroy all the Demons that were after Eve! Then steal her Core after!

"Kahahahaha!"

I'll be the one who's laughing from now on. Add laughed much as he could while drawing picture of the enjoyable future inside his head. It felt great, it almost felt like all the suffering he went through were disappearing.

"Are you also trying to breathe more Mr.Add?"

....Let's ignore Ara's indication coming from beside him.

It was night.

"Okay, then....is everyone ready? You all remember where to go right?"

All the captive girls unanimously answered Rena's words. They had gone over the escape route through the Underground Waterway so much that even the captives had it memorized by now.

"Elder's militia are waiting for you inside the Waterway. We'll protect everyone in getting to the Waterway's entrance so everyone please move while remaining calm."

"Ms.Rena! I finished untying everyone!"

After hearing Ara's energetic report that all of the captive's ropes were untied, Rena looked back towards Eve and Add.

"Then shall we start?"

"Eve, is battle ready"

Add didn't respond and repeatedly made a fist with his hand then opened them again. The scenes of his past failures flashed by in his eyes whenever he tried to focus.

Eve, destroyed no matter how many times he turned back time, but this time was different. He'll....make it different!

Psssssh!!

Signal flare that Rena had attached to her arrow flew out the window. It was a signal alerting the Elder's militia that the operation had started. But at the same time, it will alert the castle's soldiers.

This was the start.

“Falling Dragon!”

In that instant, Ara smashed the ground with her fist. Then the metal gate that had been keeping the captives enclosed seemed to make a cracking sound then got bent awkwardly.

“....Huh?”

But it only got bent and not destroyed.

Ara got embarrassed by everyone's blank stares and tried to run up close to the metal gate but she tripped on something and fell on her face.

“Owie!”

“.....Void Impact!!”

Add couldn't bear to watch anymore and blew up the metal door with the space shattering shockwave. Expressions of the captives brightened after finally getting to breathe fresh air in so long.

“Alright, let's hurry everyone!”

The captives came to their senses at Rena's words and started to run forwards. El Search Party also followed suit and moved forwards.

The operation to conquer Wally's Castle had started.

Although they moved late at night, it was impossible for hundreds of people moving all at once to not get detected.

That's why they had initially come up with a disturbance strategy. But that plan was dismissed because Add had refused it and Eve also backed up Add's opinion. Then their second strategy was....

“Shooting Magnum!!”

“Pulling Pierce!!”

“Hornet Sting!!”

To charge in directly while defeating every soldier that got in their way. Add clicked his tongue as he looked down while flying up high on his Dynamos. It was obvious that the soldiers would swarm in if the party had attempted to break through up front like this. But that didn't make any difference.

Soldiers against the El Search Party were like measly leaves getting blown away by the wind.

"Where is it....?"

There was only one thing that was a problem in this castle, Wally Robot.

When they finally realize that they can't handle the El Search Party no matter how much soldiers they threw at them....then they will....

Thump!!

Add dived down soon as he heard this hair rising noise. He flew down towards Rena who was running in the front leading the escaping girls.

"A powerful enemy appeared. Send all the captives up front, all of us have to stay and fight together."

"What?"

Rena made a surprised expression then quickly made a beautiful sounding whistle. Then as if they had planned this beforehand, all the girls ran ahead of the Search Party with Ariel in the lead.

"It's not too far from the Underground Waterway from here so they should be fine. But you can never be too sure so can you watch them from above Add?"

"There's no time. I told you, a powerful enemy has appeared."

"Is there a powerful enemy?"

"Then I'll follow those people!"

Ara tried to energetically catch up to the captives but Add quickly grabbed her arms.

Add's true goal wasn't to rescue the captive girls. It was to make the El Search Party fight against Demons with full preparations.

He obviously couldn't exempt Ara from their fighting force.....and he also couldn't exempt Eun who was likely more powerful than Ara.

"Just stay here! This is more important right now!"

"B, But...."

Ara stared at Rena with a troubled expression. Rena stopped to think for a moment then she nodded.

“Okay. So where’s the powerful enemy?”

Creak, Creak, a mechanical sound approaching them substituted as an answer. Add let out a nervous breath after seeing the hunk of metal that appeared around the corner.

It looked shabby on the outside but Add knew all too well how powerful it was.

“Everyone be caref....”

“Freezing Arrow!”

Rena fired an arrow to freeze the Wally Robot No.44 before Add could even finish speaking. Wally Robot got frozen solid in its attack motion and couldn’t do anything. Rena didn’t miss this chance and continued to fire arrows at it.

“Rapid Shot!!!”

Dozens of arrows flew towards the frozen Wally Robot and pierced it mercilessly.....

Booom!

And it got destroyed with an explosion.

Add couldn’t close his gaping jaws after seeing an enemy that had troubled him so much get erased before it could even launch a proper attack.

He knew that Rena was powerful. But it was up to this extent? It wasn’t only Add that was shocked. Ara also had her eyes wide open and couldn’t even breathe properly. Eve didn’t change her expression but also seemed extremely surprised.

“So where’s the powerful enemy?”

Rena asked as if it was nothing. Add was astonished. If he had known Rena possessed such overwhelming skills.....He could have solved this with her help earlier!

This thought instantly ran by Add’s mind but he didn’t let his guard down. Even Add could defeat Wally Robot if he gave it his all. He could probably have beaten it much easier now that he had become stronger from his time travels.

The real problem started now.

“Darkness.....Ruin, Death!!”

The darkness across from them seemed to distort.....then a Dimension Gate got created. Add explained quickly before the other members could get caught off guard.

“They are extremely powerful so be caref....”

Rena fired an arrow before Add could finish explaining. Shadow Master and its minions that tried to come through the Dimension Gate all got frozen solid.

.... Could it be that all this time.....everything could have been solved with just Rena’s help? Add’s face unconsciously turned pale in astonishment. But Rena’s expression looked very grave.

She was admitting that these weren’t enemies she could dispatch of easily like before.

“There are a lot of them but the captives will get exposed to danger if we pull back here.”

“Understood.”

“Yes! I’m ready too!”

Ara pointed her fingers at the enemies after grabbing the spear she had thrown upwards. Did Eun have no intention of helping them right now? Add gave a side glance at Ara but he didn’t have the moment to ask her.

Crash!!

With the sound of glass breaking, Shadow’s Master’s frozen body returned to normal. Not only Shadow Master, but hundreds of its minions also returned to normal.

“Everyone, be careful.”

Rena spoke kindly as she started firing arrows. Ara instantly dashed forwards bravely.

Add released all of the boiling rage pent up within him as he shouted loudly.

“Void Field!!”

I’m going to send all of you to hell starting now!!

The alternate space Add opened up restrained Shadow Master and various demons near it. At that moment, Ara dove deep within the enemies while swinging her spear.

“Haaaah!!”

She shouted with a clear voice as she swept through the helpless demons. Four to five demons went flying each time she swung her spear. But their advantage was short lived. The Void field that Add had opened was losing strength.

“I’m joining in.”

Eve was about to follow and join Ara who was sweeping through the enemies in the front line. Add quickly raised his arm to stop her.

“You go and assist us beside Rena. I’ll go.”

Add’s ultimate goal was to prevent Eve from getting destroyed. He actually felt like kidnapping Eve right now and hiding her somewhere no one could find..... But since that was impossible, he was trying to keep Eve in a location where he could protect her.

Furthermore, the goal of these demons was destruction of Eve. He couldn’t let her go out to the front line. Eve tried to say something with an unsatisfactory expression but Add had already jumped on his Dynamos and was dashing forwards.

“Void Impact!!”

Along with Add’s shout, demons that were aiming for Ara’s back blew up into pieces. Ara looked backwards welcomingly after swinging her spear in a half circle.

“Thank you Mr.Add!”

“Watch out in front you idiot!”

Seven shadow demons that were now free from Void Field were charging at Ara. She couldn’t handle them all by herself no matter how skilled she was with the spear!

Just when Add increased the speed of his Dynamos, something even faster than his Dynamos flew by his ears.

Ssh! Ssh!! Sounds passed by and arrows hit their marks. Rena had started supporting them from the back.

“Kahaha!! Great!!”

Add shouted joyfully and trampled the demons with Dynamo’s shockwaves. It was very difficult for Add to face these demons last time. But he could now defeat them without much difficulty after strangely becoming more powerful from his time travels.

Not only that, Ara fighting beside him dispersed the enemy’s attention and Eve and Rena quickly assisted from the back during dangerous moments.

It was a 4vs100 fight but they were pulling through smoothly.

“Dark fire orbs!!”

Shadow Master couldn't stand watching its minions get defeated so helplessly anymore and scattered demonic orbs all around the battlefield. Add recalled from his past experience that those orbs were about to explode soon. He hurriedly raised his voice.

"Destroy those quickly!!"

"Yes!!"

Ara withdrew from attacking the demons with her spear and started to lightly step on the Shadow demons' bodies to launch herself and used that momentum to thrust her spear into the orbs. After leaving the front line to Ara, Add quickly turned around and flew towards Rena and Eve in the back.

But Add's worries were for naught because Rena's arrows had just finished cleaning up the Dark Fire Orbs at the back. Eve scolded Add as to why he came back here.

"Why did you come here leaving Ara Haan behind?"

"Kyaah!!"

Soon as Eve's words ended, a scream was heard from the front line.

Eve was relatively safe long as Rena was beside her. Then the key to victory was to quickly dispatch all the enemies fast as possible! Add instantly analyzed the situation and U-turned again. He flew rapidly towards Ara who was surrounded.

Ara had just finished clearing last of the Dark Fire Orbs. But she must have gotten grazed by the Sniper's beam attack and was now rolling on the ground. With the stroke of incredibly bad luck, she rolled in front of a Shadow Charger that was bidding for its chance.

The Shadow Charger gladly opened its arms as if to welcome her. If you got caught in there....you won't be able to do anything and die from the focused attacks by other demons!!

Just when Add was about to quickly calculate a way to assist, Ara hit the ground with her palm as she rolled and performed a single somersault.

"Prepare yourselves."

Ara's hairpin was released and her hair got dyed white. The demons around her were momentarily startled by this. Ara thrust her spear behind her without even looking.

Stab!!

Surprisingly, the spear accurately pierced through the chest of Shadow Charger that was preparing for Ara with open arms. After escaping from danger with a clean strike, Ara didn't withdraw her spear and spun around once. Suddenly, the enemies near her got caught up by the sweep of her spear.

Wrrrrrrrrr!!

With the sound of wind getting torn apart.....a silence descended upon the battlefield.

“Full Moon!”

It was a scene where nothing seemed to move. As if the time had stopped. Then a single breeze passed by. Dozens of demons disappeared all at once turning into a black smoke.

She had just inflicted critical damage on all of them with a single sweep.

“....”

Even Add who was watching was so surprised that he couldn’t even make a sound. He had known Ara was skilled with the spear.....but this was really amazing. Honestly, even Add wouldn’t have been able to respond to this single hit attack and got done in.

It was that much of a clean and efficient strike.

“....Eun?”

“No, I’m Ara.”

Ara fixed her posture and smiled politely after eradicating all the demons around her. It was a very innocent smile for a girl that had just buried dozens of demons.

But that didn’t last long as Ara turned around to look fiercely at the remaining Shadow Demons.

“It seems there aren’t that many left....”

Just as she said, there weren’t even 20 demons remaining. Rena and Eve were continuing to clear the demons by supporting from behind, and Ara’s single sweep just now had cleared out the most of them.

Demons were now hesitating to attack. Even the Shadow Snipers that were capable of long range attack were nervously looking at their boss, Shadow Master.

They were acting like this because so many of their comrades were defeated, causing their morale to drop. Shadow Master must have noticed this atmosphere and slowly started to come forwards.

“So it’s finally moving....”

“I’ll defeat the Demon!!”

White haired Ara charged in bravely without any hesitation towards Shadow Master that was almost 5 meters in height. Add was slightly taken aback at Ara running into Demons in a straight line but focused his mind. This was the final hurdle they had to overcome.

“Void Impact!!”

Add blew away Shadow demons that were in Ara’s path by stretching out his left hand. Then right after, Add immediately stretched out his right hand.

The skill he couldn’t perform before, the skill he obtained during his time travels!

“Void Impact!!”

It was activating Dynamos consecutively using continuous calculations. Shadow Master was about to swing its arm at Ara but it got hit directly by the Void Impact and staggered.

If he had to give it a name, it would be Void Double Impact. It carried out the berserk actions Add had performed on impulse during his battle with Dark Count Ran. Instead this time it was performed through cold and precise calculations. This chained Double Impact was obviously much more destructive than the single Impact....

“Huff, Huff....”

But it also had a large feedback. Add was drenched in sweat because he had to overly concentrate and perform strained calculations. But his condition right now was still better than the last time where he carelessly used this multi-calculation to the point where his arm got torn to shreds....Although his legs were shaking so much right now that it was difficult to stand.

But because of the reckless Void Double Impact that Add had launched, the girl that rushed in bravely was able to arrive in front of the Shadow Master safely.

“Dragon Fang!!”

Just inside the reach of her spear. Ara threw her body sideways to smash her spear towards the ground, slashing the Shadow Master’s lower body.

“Pulling Pierce!!”

Continuing 2nd strike tore apart Shadow Master’s main body. Then she struck again with both of her palms.

“Power Hit!!”

Then Ara immediately hit the ground and jumped up. Shadow Master had lost its posture due to Ara’s previous continuous attacks and couldn’t do anything but to watch Ara as she jumped up into the air in front of its eyes. After reaching the maximum height of her jump, Ara swung her spear sharply as she fell.

“Blast!!”



“After reaching the maximum height of her jump, Ara
swung her spear sharply as she fell.

“Blast!!”

The tip of Ara's spear hit the ground after tearing through Shadow Master's body as if it was made out of paper. The strike had so much force that even after it shattered Shadow Master in half, the remaining force of the strike caused a tremor starting from the spot where her spear had hit the ground.

Crash!!

The earthquake that followed after destroyed the ground as it swept up and destroyed other demons that were standing nearby. Ara gasped for breath with her spear stabbed on the ground after sweeping away all of the enemies near her with complete sequence of her Dragon Fang secret art. But just when Ara was about to pull her spear out of the ground, she opened her eyes in surprise.

The lone Shadow Master that had lost all its minions, a demon that was wavering after getting its body shattered in half, swung its arm towards Ara. Ara was so startled to find out that it was still moving after getting hit by Blast that she couldn't react. She was so shocked to the point where she couldn't even think about trying to hold her spear up to at least attempt to block the attack.

Add who was watching from further away noticed this situation and instinctively shouted loudly.

“Eun!!!”

Ara's life was in danger. Shouldn't she come fully to the surface right now?!

But the sound of wind tearing came faster than Add's shout. Rena had sensed Ara's crisis and immediately fired out dozens of arrows. Shadow Master's body got pierced by arrows and shook violently before it was able to attack Ara.

“Uwwooooohh!!”

Shadow Master let out a long scream after having its body broken by Add's Void Impact, shattered in half by Ara's spear and now rained down upon by Rena's arrows.

It couldn't hold out no matter how tenacious of a Demon it was.

Boom!!

Its body blew up and its scream was stifled. With Shadow Master's explosion, a silence descended upon the battlefield which was filled with intense battle just a moment earlier.

“Phew....”

Only Rena's thin sigh told them that the time was still flowing. Add was gasping for breath due to overstraining his body. He barely managed to bring up his body to stand.

Ara recovered from her shock and waved her hand left and right towards Add. It looks like she still had plenty of stamina.

“....So unnecessarily energetic.”

Add frowned when Ara started come towards him with hopping strides. But he wasn't actually feeling unpleasant. He also couldn't believe this situation. If he had the strength to pinch his face right now...he would have done so.

“Is it over....?”

Add took a look around again. He had succeeded in defeating Shadow demons that came through the Dimension gate to destroy Eve.

“We won!!”

Ara's shout as she ran towards him finally gave Add some sense of reality.

That's right. They won. He still couldn't believe it....they had just defeated the enemy Add had struggled so much against. Add brought his hand he just used for Void Double Impact in front of his face.

Was this victory because of his time travels?

“We won! Isn't that right Mr.Add?!”

Ara had run up close to him and asked with a shine in her eyes. She looked extremely happy. Add didn't want to speak out loud so he just replied with a nod.

For some reason he was afraid to say the fact out loud.

“I'm glad Mr.Add is okay too!!”

Ara was smiling then tilted her head. It was because Add was wordlessly staring at her face, more correctly, he was staring at the area above her head.

“What's wrong, Mr.Add?”

“It's nothing.....”

Did Eun predict this future and plotted to send Add to this timeline? Add's head was filled with various complex thoughts but he eventually stopped thinking about it. The problem that had been bugging him so frighteningly was now over.

“Yea, we won.”

Add murmured as he examined the others. Rena was wiping the sweat off her forehead, and Eve was sweeping the dust off her clothes.

She was perfectly safe.....

“.....”

Add opened his eyes widely. This couldn't be possible. No, it was something that shouldn't happen!

“Darkness....Ruin, Death!!”

It seemed the space behind Eve was getting distorted....Then the Dimension Gate opened again. Add instantly got on his Dynamos without any further thoughts.

“Ara!! Help Rena!!”

Add flew quickly surpassing the Dynamo's limitation speed. Eve must have felt something was wrong too and was turning around.

No, don't turn around!! Dodge!!

“Eveeeeeee!!”

Too much distance was between them! Far! Way too far!! But its fine, unlike his body which acted on impulse, his head was extremely clear.

This chance I barely managed to grasp, I can't let it end like last time!

There's no way I'll see her get destroyed in front of my eyes again!!

Add clenched his teeth with such a force that they almost broke and in that instant, the space around him tore. He had used the secret skill he used before when Ran had appeared, the short distance space warp.

After jumping through dozens of meters in an instant, Add frantically waved his right arm. Eve had just noticed the new enemy and was about to change into battle mode. But she got hit by Add's arm and got pushed back a long distance.

Add was now alone by himself amongst the enemies. He opened his left hand to fire a Void Impact forwards. Shadow demons got swept up by the explosion and turned into smoke....But the newly appeared Shadow Master only flinched at the impact.

It was impossible to reverse the Dynamo's forward movement now that it was already moving in full speed. Short distance space warp wasn't something he could use carelessly. After space warp, it was impossible to change directions and Dimension Distortion mode was also temporarily disabled.

Add couldn't do anything as he looked up vacantly towards the giant hand poised to strike down at him.

".....My calculation was wrong."

He couldn't escape from the giant Shadow Master's range even if he were to jump off the Dynamos right now. Also, getting off the Dynamos meant he will lose his mobility. There was no way minion Demons will miss that chance.

He was like the moth that had jumped into the fire. Only thing left for him now was to burn.

Add let out an empty laugh. His calculation was completely wrong. Rena had gotten surrounded by dozens of Shadow demons and was fighting back with kicks. Ara was running towards Rena to help her.

There was no one that could help him now.

Since his body was no different from that of a normal human's, he'll die instantly when that Shadow Master's arm drops down on him.

Add sensed what was about to happen and unconsciously looked behind him

Eve he pushed away was finally getting up. Her eyes were opened extremely widely. She must have realized what was about to happen in front of her.

What? You knew how to make that kind of face.....?

Expression dyed into the Nasod's face was dread and horror. Add clicked his tongue.

Why are you giving such a dynamic reaction? It was an appropriate reaction for the masterpiece he had acknowledged.....But why did the final face he saw from her had to be this?

"Hmph."

With Add's snort, Shadow Master swung its arm down as if it was swatting a fly. The strike was filled with so much potential energy that his body will break horribly upon impact and he'll die instantly. But Add didn't close his eyes at the approaching darkness.

If this was the end, I'll continue laugh with my eyes wide open!!

"Kahahahahaha!!"

Add impulsively broke out laughing as the shadow loomed upon him. This was such an abrupt ending despite how he had tried so hard even traveling through time.....well, it wasn't too bad.

Slassssh!!!

Add could only blink his eyes after hearing the heart chilling noise just now. Before, he was still able to move instinctively when he had been extremely surprised by the second Shadow Master's appearance. But now, he couldn't even do that.

Just where did this red haired boy who slashed away the Shadow Master's hand come from?

Boy who had arrived through the darkness looked back calmly.

"Big brother Add, What are you doing?"

Elsword gripped his sword and shouted.

"Fight!!"

Unlike Add who was frozen in surprise, Elsword didn't show any signs of hesitation. After putting strength in his legs to stand firmly, he swung his sword to hit away the Shadow Master's arm that flew towards him again.

Because of their obvious difference in size and power....Elsword's body was scarred each time they exchanged attacks. But Elsword's fighting spirit did not die.

"Hmph! Is that all you got? Flame Geyser!!"

Witnessing the ground shake and flame gush out finally brought Add to his senses. In his final moments where he had been prepared for death.....the person that saved him was Elsword? Add couldn't even begin to process this information. But he was certain of one thing.

Right now was time to fight!!

"Particle Accel!!"

Thanks to the time Elsword bought for him, Add was able to fire all particles that Dynamos had gathered abundantly. A shockwave tore through the space and knocked out Shadow Chargers that were rushing in after Elsword.

Finally able to get a moment to take a breath, Add quickly examined the battlefield. Rena and Ara far away were too busy facing the minion demons to assist this side.

Behind him was Eve, the target he had to protect at all costs.

In front of him was Shadow Master, an enemy that exhausted Add could never defeat on his own.

But beside him was a red haired boy who was swinging his sword fiercely.

“....I’m joining in!!”

This wasn’t the time to be picky. He didn’t care whose hand he borrowed in order to obtain the future where Eve was safe.

“Void Field!!”

Add snapped his finger to open an alternate space and suppressed the Shadow Master and its minions.....Elsword instantly kicked the ground and rushed forwards.

“Assault Slash!!”

As Elsword dived in, the tip of his sword launched away all of the demons in its way and stabbed into Shadow Master’s body. Black smoke emerged from Shadow Master’s wound. It seemed it dealt quite a bit of damage.....But it was way too insufficient to defeat Shadow Master.

And the alternate space that Add had opened was ending! Shadow Master was free to move now and tried to swing its arm at Elsword again. Add shouted without thinking.

“Void Field!!”

Before it was Void Double Impact, and now Void Double Field. He had never even thought about trying to use this.... Alternate space opened up again and suppressed the Shadow Master’s body once more.

Elsword who raised his sword in order to block Shadow Master’s attack immediately noticed the change in situation and started attacking again.

Shadow Master’s body staggered widely when Elsword attacked it with a wide swing of his sword. This was the chance to deal critical damage to it!! Add tried to stretch his arm forwards to assist.... But his arm wasn’t moving well for some reason.

Kugh!

Something felt like it was coming up from within him.....then blood dripped down along his lips. Add wiped his mouth with his sleeve and noticed that he had just vomited blood.

It was actually obvious. In the first place, this stacking attack, Double, caused enormous feedback on his body. This much was rather civil considering how his entire body got ripped apart from the recoil last time when he faced Ran.

“Huff, Huff....”

Add attempted to assist Elsword the best he could ignoring the blood dripping along his lips. But his sight was dizzy and his arm wasn’t moving well. The second Void Field disappeared and Elsword was surrounded by the Demons.

She wouldn't just sit and....watch this situation!!

Add's heart sank as he looked behind instinctively. Eve who had just stood up was thoughtlessly rushing towards Elsword to save him.

No, that will just let them achieve their goal. But Add couldn't move right now because of the feedback.

Again....? It's going to turn out like this again? No matter how startled he had been, was his choice to fight along with Elsword against Shadow Master stupid?

Just when Add's eyes were filled with despair....Something unbelievable happened. Elsword calmly swung his sword to shake off the attacks then retreated backwards.

Elsword that Add had known obviously wouldn't even think about backing off. But Elsword right now had reacted as if he had read Add's mind.

That muscle head can think? Do I have to report this new discovery to the scientific community?

Add was so swept up in confusion that he was late in realizing the fact that Elsword was running towards him. Elsword dodged Shadow Snipers' beams that came from far away by moving left and right as he approached Add.

"Big brother Add, What are you doing?!"

Elsword raised Add's body and moved it backwards. Elsword then got surprised by blood running down Add's mouth and asked.

"Did you get hit somewhere?"

"That's...."

As he was getting dragged backwards by Elsword, Add realized his current situation late and shook off Elsword's arm.

"I just made a momentary mistake. I'm fine now."

"Really? Alright."

Elsword turned his body towards the front again as if there was no more reason to ask. Shadow Master's body was damaged due to Elsword and Add's attacks earlier but it was still alive and well.

"Then what should we do now? Big brother Add? Do you have any good plans?"

"....Why would you ask me that?"

Despite this desperate situation, Add ended up asking unconsciously. Wasn't Elsword just a scatterbrain who couldn't even measure his own strength and only knew about how to rush in forward to fight?

Elsword he had observed so far was like that.

Other members were sure that Elsword would become stronger and Add could at least agree to that much.....But he was never able to evaluate Elsword's intelligence highly.

"Because Big brother Add is smarter than me. Can you think of a good way to beat that thing?"

"...."

Add doubted his ears at what Elsword just said without any hesitation. Was our relationship always like this? But Elsword was only sending him a gaze as if to say 'why are you sitting there dumbfounded?'

"There is a way...."

"I'll join in too."

Eve who had ran up close to them as they were talking spoke shortly. Just when Add was about to protest, Eve summoned Nasod spears and stabbed in front of her. Four Shadow Demons that were running at three of them got pierced and fell backwards.

"There's no time."

"....Right."

It was too naïve to think of excluding Eve here. Eve will be destroyed anyways if they couldn't defeat Shadow Master. It was correct to borrow Eve's powers as well in order to defeat the enemies.

"What we have to aim for aren't the small fries, it's the Shadow Master. Elsword, you run in and attack it with a powerful skill. Then Eve, you use the short time gap after Elsword's attack to position yourself then shred it with Junk Break."

"....Yes, understood."

Eve made a somewhat odd expression but nodded. Add looked in front after giving the instructions. There weren't many demons nearby Shadow Master due to Rena and Ara who were fighting hard far away.

But this was the second Shadow Master, was there any guarantee that there won't be a third?

"I have no basis....but this is probably the last one."

"Really? That's good."

“Then let’s begin.”

It was only Add’s wishful thinking. Elsword and Eve didn’t protest even though Add had said there was no basis.

Add would have normally evaluated this as being too soft hearted.....But for now, he just burst out a short laugh.

“Destroy it completely together when I give the go. Go!”

Add jumped on the Dynamos and charged towards the Shadow Master. Not wanting to fall behind, Elsword also rushed in as he kicked the ground. Eve also started dashing in parallel to the two of them.

This was completely different from the decisive battle he had planned.....But this wasn’t bad at all!

“Kahahaha!! Void Field!!”

Add burst out an insane laugh as he opened up the alternate space again to suppress the Shadow Master and its minions. At that moment, Elsword didn’t even give an eye to the other demons and charged straight towards the Shadow Master as he slammed the ground.

“Triple Geyser!!!”

As Elsword struck the ground hard with his sword, three pillars of flame broke through the ground as they rose up. Judging by its significant power, it must have been a skill that Elsword had been saving up.

But it was insufficient to defeat Shadow Master!! Add shouted hysterically.

“Elsword!! Protect Eve!!”

It was honestly stupid. It was a method that Add wouldn’t have normally come up with. But this was the most important part of the plan that Add had come up with on the spot!!

Elsword was extremely vexed that he couldn’t defeat Shadow Master with the skill he had put all his strength into. He thought that he could defeat it if he attacked it just a bit more. Yet he listened to Add’s shout without question and turned around to run towards Eve.

Any man that fought with a sword would have desires to swing his sword at prey that he almost defeated. Yet he obediently listened to Add’s instructions. Add shuddered inside at Elsword’s honest to a fault reaction.

He had calculated it. But he didn’t think Elsword would actually move according to his calculation!!

Eve arrived just a step later and shouted as she charged in towards the Shadow Master who was still alive.

“Junk Break!!”

Skill that Eve had kept hidden up her sleeves, a giant shredder that tore apart anything caught inside was summoned and started to shred Shadow Master apart.

Not just Shadow Master, but all the minion demons nearby got sucked in. This skill had such a frightening power and yet....

“Is it.... not enough after all?”

It was a skill that did away with Wally Robot with one go. But it was slightly insufficient to take down Shadow Master. Speed of the shredder’s spin started to slow down. Shadow Master’s lower body was destroyed beyond recognition, but it was still moving.

Not only that, Void Field’s duration was now over and Shadow Master was free to move.....and Eve knelt on the ground unable to move because of the Junk Break’s after effect.

Add had already known she couldn’t move for a moment after using Junk Break. That’s why he had asked Elsword although he honestly didn’t want to.

“Hayaah!”

With Eve who knelt immobile behind him, Elsword heroically swung his sword in response to Shadow Master’s arm swing and blocked its attack. Elsword fought without backing down even by a step. He fought with the will that he won’t let anyone get past him, that he won’t let anyone approach the weakened Eve.

It looked like a scene right out of a fairy tale. A knight fighting against the devil in order to protect the princess.....It was so bright that it almost blinded Add.

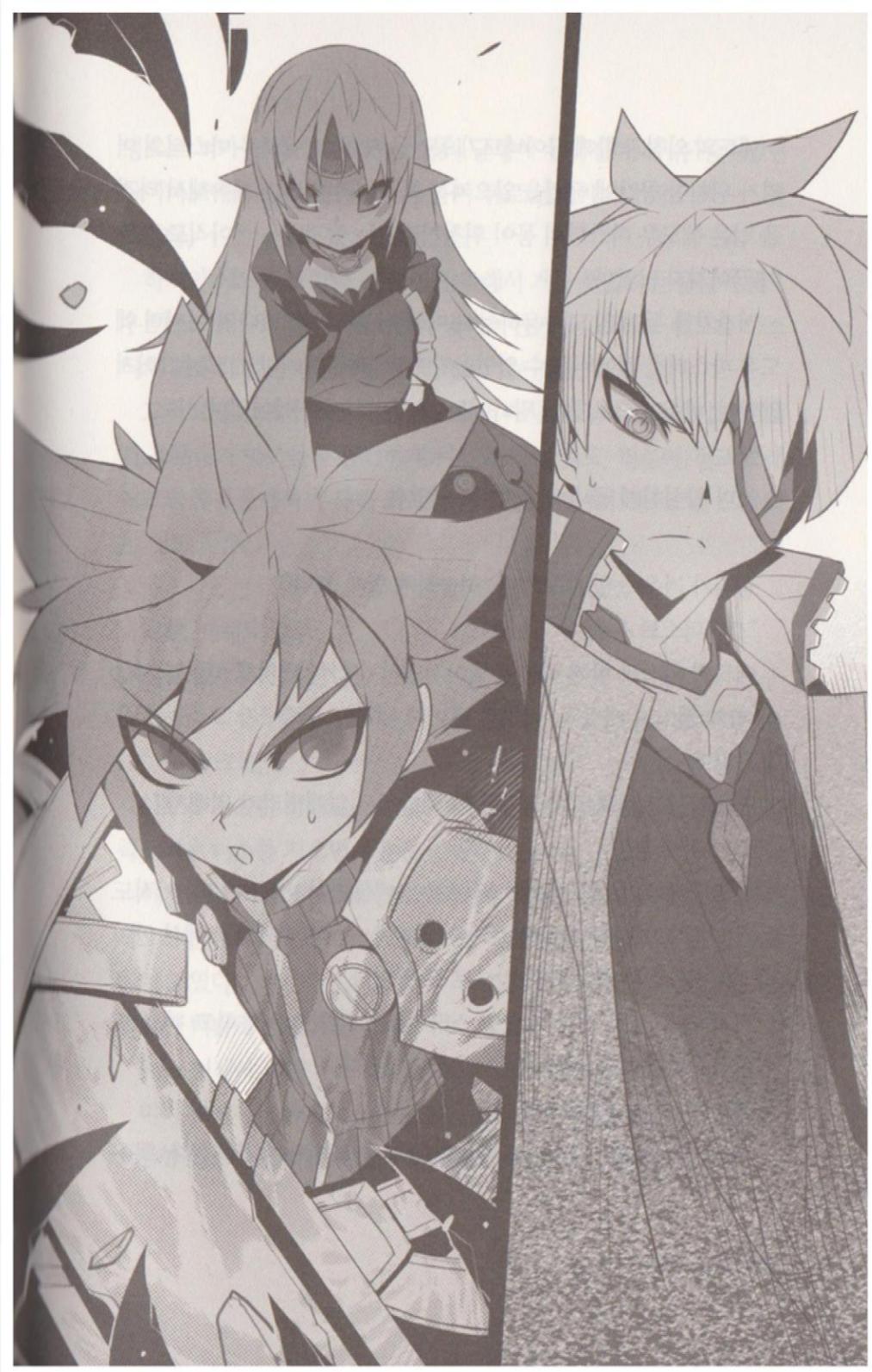
Elsword’s swordplay had stolen Add’s gaze before Add realized it himself. But Add managed to force his head around. He had no time to focus on such picture like scene.

The role of knight that fought to protect the queen wasn’t his.

He was the only one that could defeat Shadow Master right now. He’ll stake everything on this!!

“Kahahahaha!!!”

With Add’s shout, Dynamos caused a distortion in the space where Shadow Master’s head was located as an explosion was created. Shadow Master’s body staggered after getting hit continuously.....but it still clung on to its life.



He could defeat Shadow Master now if he used the Double Void Impact which didn't have a time gap. But Add didn't use it. It wasn't because he was afraid of his body getting destroyed by the feedback.

It was to finish this with certainty.

I can finally see the victory in front of me. There's no way I'd do this half heartedly!!

“Stardust Shower!!!”

Sky tore open with Add's shout and dozen rounds of gravity orbs dropped towards the ground. The gravity orbs that rained down from the sky were all aimed towards one point.

In order to erase that eye sore Shadow Master from this world!!

“Kwaaaaaaaagghh!!!”

Shadow Master shook violently as it got hit by rain of gravity orbs. Surprisingly, it still had the strength to move.....But this was within his calculations as well. Add held out his hand forward without hesitation.

It would be dangerous if he used this skill right after he had used his most powerful move Stardust Shower. But it didn't matter.

“Void Double Impact!!!”

The cost of using a skill that put lots of load on his body without any hesitation was brutal. Blood burst up from Add's throat as his body lost balance. His feet dropped from the floating Dynamo and his body fell backwards.....towards the ground.

But Add saw. How the compressed space he set up caused a chain explosion to evaporate Shadow Master's head without a trace, and how Shadow Master's giant body turned into a black smoke.

How Elsword was still not backing down an inch as he fought to protect Eve from the minion demons. And how Eve was able to recover from the Junk Break's after effect and stood up to assist Elsword.

Alright, that's enough.

I'm satisfied now after seeing that.

“....Kukukuk.”

Eve, now in a safe state.....defeated all the demons that came at her. Add made a satisfactory smile as he closed his eyes.

But his body stopped before his head hit the ground. Add who had prepared for impact opened his eyes narrowly.....He could see a person carrying him with both arms.

It was Ara whose hair had turned white earlier.

“....Now you come out?”

The fox ears that shook on top of her head, it was Eun. Eun let off her usual voluptuous smile but calmly nodded her head.

“That was magnificent, Boy.”

“Is it over....now?”

There won't be a third Shadow Master or anything like that right? Was it really over? He didn't even have the strength to move his fingers anymore but still wanted to make sure.

“Don't worry. This situation is now over....”

Able to ease his mind now, Add closed his eyes. He had no more strength left.

“Rest well, boy. I'll handle the remaining tasks.”

Add heard an extremely gentle voice before he lost consciousness.

3. Associate

The world burns.

Screams that tore through his ears. Nothing moved or changed no matter how much he struggled. The boy with his face pushed down on the ground pulled up his eyes to look in front of him while groaning in pain.

The place that meant everything to him, the place he grew up in all his life was disappearing before his eyes as it got consumed by the flames.

“No.....”

His voice was stifled by the screams no matter what he said.

“No.”

Nothing changed no matter how desperately he called.

“No!!!!!”

He couldn’t do a thing as he saw his most important person die in front of him.

“No, Mom!!!”

It couldn’t be turned back no matter how much he screamed in lamentation..... Just who had decided this was a fact?

The boy had to witness the flames consume everything important to him as he got pushed down by those detestable people. Boy made a solemn vow as he cried out.

That he’ll turn back time.

That he’ll get back everything stolen from him even if he had to crush the ethics of nature, even if he had to destroy the laws of the universe!!

Add was lying on his side when he opened his eyes. He saw an unfamiliar window.

“This is....”

Add made a large sigh then tried moving his fingertips. They moved freely. There seemed to be no damage to his nerves.

‘Double’, the skill he ended up learning through his time travels was extremely overburdening for his body. There existed a necessary formula that had to be performed in order to activate the Dynamos.

But using this ‘Double’ was close to recklessly executing this formula multiple times simultaneously while taking out the part of the formula that acted as a safety device.

Its possibility for greater power was almost infinite depending on how Add used it. But he wasn’t sure of what kind of after effects it would bring.

Add installed the Dimension Distortion mode to his Dynamos in order to time travel safely. But ‘Double’ was like jumping into a Time Space Wormhole without any safety devices.

Continuing to fight this way was dangerous. Add’s body will get injured for sure. Then after certain point..... His body will become broken beyond repair. He had a feeling that it won’t end with just simple injuries when such a time came. Add could feel that an ending worse than he could imagine was waiting for him if he kept fighting like this.

“But....I’m alive for now.”

When Add let out a sigh of relief after examining his body, he heard a voice from behind him.

“Are you regretful that you’re alive?”

“What happened after that?”

Voluptuous voice filled with allure. Add knew whose voice it was without even having to turn around.

“Didn’t I say I’ll handle all the remaining tasks? So I did. I also went ahead and healed boy’s body with Clairvoyant powers.”

“I see....”

Add had defeated Shadow Master but there were still its minions remaining. Eun must have wiped them all out.

“How about the others? Is Eve safe?”

“Of course she’s safe. You don’t have to worry about anything at least for today, boy.”

It felt surreal even though he heard the answer. Add stared at the half opened window and let out a thin sigh.

Was it really over? Did he finally succeed in defeating the demons that came after Eve? He still couldn’t believe despite how much he repeatedly questioned himself.

It felt like he could believe only after he saw that Eve was safe and sound. Add raised his upper body to get up then frowned at the noisiness outside the window.

“It’s unnecessarily loud. I’m getting tired just listening to it.”

"I kept it open because I thought would be better for you to get some fresh air. Shall I close it for you?"

Add was slightly surprised internally at Eun's fresh words. This fox that was always saying something strange and kept having fun taunting him...was now actually speaking like a human?

"Kukuk, its fine. Since I'll be going outside now."

"Then let me bring you your clothing."

Add blinked when he looked around to see Eun. A thought flashed by in his mind that this could be a dream.

"Why are you staring at me so passionately, boy?"

"You, you...."

Words didn't come out. He wished this was a dream. Eun gently wagged her tails when Add couldn't continue his words.

"Why are you not wearing anything?!"

Eun was sitting on the chair beside the bed and wasn't wearing anything. Eun smiled and held up her hand to protest.

"I'm not completely naked. I borrowed boy's clothing for a bit."

Just like Eun had said, she was wearing Add's jacket on top of her bare body. But such details didn't matter at all!!

"How come you are naked!?"

"Because Ara's clothes got so much blood on them and had to be washed."

Add could only repeatedly open and close his mouth like the fish out of water. Eun laughed voluptuously seeing this.

"Ah, I'm sorry. It seems I wasn't able to fulfill boy's fantasies. I'll undress Rena and bring her beside you next time. Look forward to it."

"I'm not talking about whom right now!?"

Just when Add was finally able to relax she goes and does something weird like this. What was she plotting?

Distaste. Confusion. How was he supposed to deal with this? That's all Add could think of right now.



“Then shall I undress the girl next? Or maybe Elsword?”

“....”

Eun continued to laugh as if she was enjoying this. That's right; he'll only get caught up in Eun's pace if he got flustered right now.

Come to think of it, this wasn't even the first time he had seen Ara's bare body. This damned fox was already naked when he met her for the first time. She then leisurely continued to bathe even after Add encountered her!!

Add glared at Eun furiously after collecting his mind. He didn't know what kind of wicked trick this was but he couldn't show signs of weakness here.

When Add started to glare at her, Eun made a mischievous smile then stretched up her arms as if to show him. Her beautifully curved collarbone. The shape of her breasts showed under the jacket as the jacket moved.

When Add didn't avert his gaze, Eun lightly flapped the jacket's collar this time. Even more of her white skin started to get dangerously revealed.

“....”

I can't do this anymore. Add desperately turned his head around and only stared at the window frame. He almost felt it would be fine if he jumped off the window right now.

“What's wrong boy? Why don't you try putting strength in your eyes like before?”

“Don't mess with me....”

Add bit his lips while swallowing his anger. He was indeed startled at first and was flustered. But continuing to stare at her after that wasn't to appreciate her.

It was because he was suspicious.

Could it be that Eun was doing this on purpose to make him falter? Exposure could be used as type of means to a goal. Could this be a measure to gain an upper hand on the conversation? If Eun could see into the future, couldn't she have already known that Add was about to arrive while she was bathing?

Eun was perfectly calm and continued bathing even when had Add appeared before her. Then she got a head start on the conversation that took after.

The more Add thought about this, more he realized that he had been playing into her hands all along.

This might have been just him being too paranoid but the suspicions continued to grow. Add shivered in distaste.

“What are you plotting again? Stop it already.”

“....”

Eun was extremely calculative. Of course she would be. How can someone who can look into the future not be calculative? She would employ numerous methods to achieve her goals.

Even during this time when Add time traveled. Add ended up in a situation where he got caught looking at the El Search Party’s girls bathing. But Add apologizing to the girls after and even cross-dressing to make up for that error earned him the party’s trust.

His misfortune had turned into a fortune. Add hadn’t planned this.....but that’s how things worked out when you looked at the whole situation objectively.

Because Add earned their trust, the party members didn’t refuse and believed him when Add who knew that Shadow Master would appear suggested sending the captives by themselves.

Entire situation became clearer now that the fight was over.

“Now I get the gist of how you operate.”

Add could only assume that Eun choosing the Time Space Coordinates to a location where everyone was bathing and her exposure right now was both means to achieve her goals. As expected of a Specter, she even slighted human’s humiliation, ethics and morality and manipulated them to her advantage.

But Spectre pretending to be a Celestial Spirit or whatever, Add had no intention of swaying his set of values for anyone. He won’t sit quietly and play into her hands.

“It looks like boy is having weird thoughts again. Well, it’s normal for one to think like that after seeing a girl’s beautiful body. I understand.”

“Quit it. I don’t want to see. So wear something already.”

Eun answered pompously at Add’s angry retort.

“Do I have any reason to listen to that request? Also, I would like to clear up boy’s misunderstanding.”

Do I have to get dragged around like this again? Add was looking only at the window while suppressing his rage. Eun started to lecture him.

“After accumulating Dao for a long time, you learn to breathe in harmony with all of creation. Power accumulated that way is called Clairvoyant Power and this power takes different forms

depending on one's aptitude. My main field is telegnosis but as I mentioned before, it's not a power that can be used carelessly."

"...."

This field of topic was unfamiliar to Add. However, he was smart enough to quickly understand what she meant.

"Boy must be suspecting that I can see through everything and manipulate everything as if they were toys on top of my palm. Well, that's wrong. Although that same suspicion is the reason why I got accused of being a Specter and got sealed away."

There was remorse and bitterness mixed into her voice. It didn't seem like she was lying.

What she said was right. Wouldn't you be afraid too if there was someone beside you that could see not only her own future but future of others as well?

At first, you'd gain benefits by listening to what she said. But as the time went by, it was natural for you to think 'what if I was being controlled according to her will?' then eventually develop suspicions and hostility towards her.

Add himself was thinking those thoughts right now.

Despite how Eun possessed enormous power, she could only appear in the form of borrowing Ara's body. Add could somewhat grasp what might have happened to Eun in her past.

"I know you won't believe me. But it's not like I can know everything. Clairvoyant power is a power that's difficult to accumulate but is too easy to lose. It's an act of gnawing away at myself so it can't be used carelessly."

"...."

Although Add didn't answer, he thought what she said made sense. If Eun was really omnipotent she wouldn't have required Add's help.

"Even if I can see into the future, everything won't always move according to my will. Because future is something that continues to change according to one's beliefs and actions....."

"What's your point?"

"I'm not omniscient or omnipotent, boy. It can't be helped if you're suspicious. But I'm honestly not."

Eun was speaking as if Add was really misunderstanding.

She was suggesting that she had only roughly known about everything that happened so far. That she didn't carry out her plans while being knowledgeable about everything.

“....Then what’s up with your appearance right now?”

“After defeating the enemy, isn’t getting drunk and frolicking with people of opposite sex of your liking the way of life in the battlefield? It’s a light entertainment, an entertainment following the ways of humans.”

You mean the ways of animals. But come to think of it, Eun was actually a type of animal. Add still continued to stare at the window as he sighed and shook his head.

He could somewhat understand now, but he still had to point something out.

“.....Stop it already. What are you going to do if Ara finds out?”

Since Ara fell asleep when Eun took the initiative, Ara wouldn’t even dream that Eun was doing something this atrocious with her body.

“It’s not like this is the first time. You don’t have to be such a stranger.”

“That was an accident.”

First time was an accident, second time was an accident that Eun masterminded, third time was now.....Isn’t Eun just the bad one here?

Add suppressed himself wanting to retort back. It felt like he wouldn’t gain anything by continuing this type of conversation.

“Ara is really foolish to trust you.”

“Do not speak ill of Ara. Although boy might say such things, doesn’t boy trust me by now? Didn’t we just have a rare heart-to-heart conversation?”

Eun unexpectedly sided with Ara. She seemed rather serious judging by how the tone of her voice had changed slightly.

Add wanted to see what kind of face she was making right now but couldn’t bring himself to turn around. He’s been staring at the window for so long that he was worried if he’d take a liking to the window.

Add cut off all useless thoughts and spoke with a force in his voice.

“If you want me to stop saying these things, then stop doing useless things like this.”

“Although boy might say such things, doesn’t boy trust me by now?”

Eun repeated what she said before. As if she wouldn’t accept him glossing this over.

“Or what? Could it be that boy still doesn’t trust me despite how the whole situation has turned out? Isn’t that a bit harsh?”

“....”

Surely, it was true that Add was able to overcome this crisis because of Eun’s help. No, without Eun’s help, he would have given up the moment when Eve was destroyed.

Although Eun was suspicious in too many ways and often made mockery out of him like this, she was an important accomplice.

The problem now was that she was naked.....

“Wear some clothes if you’re going to talk.”

“I’ve been finding this strange since before. Why does boy get disturbed over something trivial like this?”

“What?”

Was it because she’s a fox that she doesn’t understand human moral ethics? But what Eun was pointing out wasn’t this.

“Couldn’t you see stuff like a girl’s body much as you’d like? Boy has the power to go back in time so he can make everything as if they’ve never happened.”

“....”

“Even if you went beyond watching and satisfied your desires. All you’d have to do is to travel back in time. There wouldn’t be any problems.”

She was right on the mark. It was just as Eun said. Even if Add were to do such things, it will all become nonexistent when Add traveled back in time.

Add unknowingly clenched his fists.

“Don’t make me laugh.”

“Excuse me. I said it to make you laugh. It seems I was inadequate for the job.”

Eun’s tone was as if she was obediently backing off. But that didn’t make Add’s distaste disappear.

If Rena joked around as a sign of affection, Eun was a type that had an underlying motive.

Even if he points something out, she just brazenly glosses it over.

Add had thought she was sharing some of her inner thoughts just before. But of course, now it’s back to square one again.

“Well, it was a prize for the boy for working so hard. This is unexpected; I thought boy would like it.”

“Stop doing whatever you want with someone else’s body.....”

Geez, what was Ara thinking believing this thing is a Celestial Spirit? Does she even know that Eun was doing these things with her body?

“....”

She probably doesn’t. Add pondered if he should tell Ara.....but there were some things you were better off not knowing.

“Ah yes, you’re right. Now then, shouldn’t you take responsibility for staring at a frail girl’s bare body with such burning gaze, boy?”

“What responsibility? You took your clothes off on your own.”

“Shouldn’t you take responsibility for staring at a beautiful girl’s bare body with such heated gaze, boy?”

“....”

This kind of conversation was getting tiresome. Add made a loud sigh so Eun could hear clearly then changed the topic.

“Will Demons come after Eve again?”

“Power of Dark El is needed for Demons to cross dimensions and arrive here. But Dark El is not that abundant of a resource. Additional deployment will be difficult for them for a while.”

She had known this kind of information yet didn’t tell him. No wonder why she couldn’t be trusted. Add wanted to nitpick at this fact but held back.

“Get out now. I want to collect my thoughts.”

“Shouldn’t you take responsibility for looking away from a cute girl’s bare body, boy?”

“Why are you being so persistent? Just what do you want to hear from me?”

Add started getting angry when Eun started to speak in a roundabout way. He couldn’t read Eun’s movements because he still didn’t dare to turn around.

“Girls tend to be persistent. But persistent males are detestable.”

“Whatever. If you have something to say then say it. You didn’t wait for me to wake up for no reason right?”

Eun made a low laugh when Add retorted in distaste.

“It’s nothing much. Just take good care of Ara from now on.”

“What?”

“Doesn’t boy think in his mind that Ara is annoying? But Ara has made up her mind to befriend all of the El Search Party members. But she’s still uncomfortable with boy and girl.”

Let’s say Add’s case was because he kept being an outsider. Was Ara uncomfortable with Eve?

Recalling the event where Add had to apologize after peeping(?), the two of them didn’t seem to have a bad relationship considering how Ara was listening in secret because she was worried about Eve.... But it did feel like Ara had some difficulties talking to Eve.

“So please try to get along well with Ara. Although she can be clumsy, she’s still a reliable child. She’s also cute when you tease her. I won’t ask you to open your heart to her but please look after her.”

Add’s face loosened after hearing the request that came from behind his back.

“Alright, I’ll keep that in mind.”

“Ooh? That’s an unexpectedly refreshing answer from you, boy.”

“I’m just annoyed that you’re still not wearing anything. Hurry up and wear something then get out.”

Add replied bluntly. But he already realized himself that there was no distaste in his voice when he answered. Normally, Eun wouldn’t have missed this fact and would have started to tease him. But she didn’t this time and was only making noises of moving clothes.

She was pretending that she hadn’t noticed.

Add pouted after realizing this. Although Eun had various suspicious elements to her, and that she couldn’t be completely trusted.....The part about how she treasured Ara seemed genuine.

Just when Add was feeling restless at the sound of moving clothes behind him, he heard another type of noise.

Creeak.

Add realized just a moment later that it was sound of the door opening. Add turned his head around instinctively and froze up.

Person that had opened the door and entered the room was Eve.

“.....”

Add could only repeatedly open and close his mouth like the fish out of water. Eve was holding a cherry aid in her hand as she examined the scene inside the room with a cold gaze.

Add who was sitting on the bed and half-naked Ara(Actually Eun) beside him.

“Please have a good time.”

“No!! Wait!!”

Eve spoke coldly despite Add’s shout then back-stepped out of the room.

He just bought an absurd misunderstanding. Add immediately got up from the bed and tried to run after her then stopped. Eun had held out her spear in front of him even before he realized.

“I know how you feel. But there’s no point in you going after her right now.”

“Whose fault do you think this is.....?”

Add growled for a moment then stopped. No matter how much Eun liked to tease him, he didn’t think Eun would act like this in this type of situation for no reason.

Eun seemed to have read Add’s assumption because she shook her head.

“No, I didn’t look into the future. I’m just saying this as a woman. It’s much more effective to go after some time gap in this situation.”

“.....”

What she said wasn’t too reliable but it was already too late to go after Eve now. Eun calmly continued explaining.

“Also, there are festivities going on currently in this Wally’s Castle. Use your disadvantage to your advantage. You’ll be able to win the girl’s favor greatly if you can use this chance well. Although it depends on boy’s efforts.”

“I got it, I got it so.....”

Add covered his face with one of his hands as he held out his other hand.

“Hand over my jacket.”

Eun was still wearing Add’s jacket on top of her naked body. Nothing had changed about Eun’s appearance despite how he had given her some time to get dressed.....

“This jacket is rather nice. Can you also make me one later?”

“I got it so hand it over!!!!”

Add finally exploded.

Door closed after Add left and Eun remained alone in the room. With a light wave of Eun's hand, her beautiful bare body was covered with clothes.

Well, she didn't lie. The part about clothes getting dirty was true. It could have been solved with a simple trick like this but she just didn't choose to.

Eun clicked her tongue after sitting on the bed with her legs crossed.

"This is troublesome. Swaying with this method is starting to be less effective so I'll have to think of something else."

While Eun knew about the depths of human feelings, she lacked subtlety. To be precise, it was probably more correct to say she had no particular interest in such things.

Was it because she had lived for so long?

"I can't even begin to think what can be done now. There's no one to discuss this matter with anymore...."

Eun narrowly opened her eyes then shook her head.

A fight had ended today. Being restless with worry wasn't like her. She also had to return the body to Ara soon.

Today was supposed to be a day when the fight had ended. It was a time for celebration. Ara who had fought hard should enjoy it too.

Eun thought this but her body dropped backwards. While lying on the bed, she narrowed her eyes and sighed.

"This is worrisome, worrisome indeed. That obsession will bring about ruin and destruction."

Elder's militia were successful in capturing the Wally's Castle thanks to the El Search Party's efforts in the front lines. All of the soldiers surrendered and every one of the captives escaped safely.

It was a happy occasion and celebration was held naturally. Castle's hallways were filled with people moving about with foods and drinks in their hands. Add frowned as he moved through the hallways jam packed with people.

"I absolutely hate noisy places....."

There was a mute feature installed on the Dynamos. But he couldn't use it now because he was looking for Eve. Add muttered as he searched while pushing through the crowds.

He had already guessed it when he saw that the castle's hallways packed with people, but the garden was packed with people as well. Sounds of meat being cooked, singing and cheers....It was completely a festival atmosphere.

"This is driving me crazy."

Although Add didn't pay much attention to the festivities, he guessed that there were around thousand people here. How was he going to find Eve in here? Dynamo's scouting mode still didn't have the ability to find a specific individual yet.

Of course, Eve was a perfect Nasod. She's bound to stand out.....

"But why am I trying to find her again?"

Add walked while muttering to himself with hands in his pockets. He then stopped to question himself. He already confirmed Eve was safe. There won't be any Demon attacks for while. So it didn't matter at all for Add if Eve misunderstood.

Shouldn't he be making plans to steal Eve's Core again?

".....Hmm."

Add stopped and thought deeply while stroking his chin. That was the logical course of action but his emotions couldn't accept it.

"I can't accept this...."

Attempting to use force to steal Eve's core was the fastest way. But he won't be satisfied with doing just that. That's right; didn't he make up his mind already?

That he'll only be satisfied when he made that pompous Eve who only looked at Elsword look at him instead.

"Yes, that's right."

Add accepted as he spoke to himself. Long as he had the ability to time travel, he could attempt same things over and over again. Just like how he had tried and tried again to stop Eve from getting destroyed. He should be able to change the fact that Eve only looked at Elsword with the same method.

Since Add went through so much trouble to keep her safe anyways, he wanted to finish things perfectly.

"The problem was....."

The exact details on how he was going to achieve that. Add groaned in deep thought. Then he heard someone call him from end of the hallway.

“Add, you’re up now?”

A beautiful women with impressionable light green hair, it was Rena. Rena asked to be excused from the people around her then approached Add with light footsteps.

Judging by how she held a glass cup in her hand, she must have been socializing with those people.

“Why did you come? You should have just continued to talk with them.”

“Everyone was worried because you collapsed. Are you okay?”

“There’s no problem.”

Was it because of Eun’s powers? He couldn’t feel any particular anomalies in his body. Rena seemed relieved hearing this and nodded.

“Thank goodness.....”

“Enough about my health. What’s with this ruckus?”

Add already had a guess but he wanted to hear the detailed explanation. Rena answered with a kind voice.

“Yes, people of Elder were successful in overthrowing the tyrannical castle Lord Wally. So they are celebrating.”

“Is that so? Did Wally escape?”

His secret weapon, Wally Robot was destroyed and reinforcement from his Demon allies had stopped as well. Wally must have had no other options.

“Kukuk, running away on an airship. He went and did something bothersome....”

“Hmm? Do you know how he ran away?”

Rena’s eyes turned round as she asked. Add stopped murmuring and stared back at Rena. Rena spoke as if she was confused.

“Wally wasn’t inside the castle from the start. Everyone thought he ran away but even the soldiers said they didn’t see him.”

“....”

Add tilted his head at Rena’s explanation. He had just spoken that line almost by reflex so he didn’t know why he said it.

Was this an after effect of time travel? Add thought for a bit then noticed Rena’s gaze. He bluntly changed the subject.

“So did you find the Ruben’s El?”

“Yes, we found it. We just sent it back to Ruben.”

“....I see.”

Add was nodding then stopped. They found the El. Then....What happens to the El Search Party now?

“Then what should we do now? Do we disband?”

“No. El is scattered across the land so we just have to find them and entrust them to the government.”

This was welcome news for Add who didn’t know about the situation in this age. Since Add only joined abruptly because Eve was in this group, he hadn’t known about this kind of background information.

Rena smiled beamingly when Add breathed a sigh of relief.

“Could it be that you were worried about being separated from everyone else?”

“Kukuk, there’s no way I’d worry about such things.”

“Hmm, I know. It would have been very sad if everyone had to separate.”

“....”

She’s continuing the conversation without listening to him. This was similar to Eun....but it was different in that in Rena’s case, it wasn’t unpleasant.

“Everyone will be able to travel together just like before. Do you feel more at ease now?”

“I told you I wasn’t worried. Listen to what I’m saying.”

Rena nodded as she smiled.

“So how’s your body? Is it fine for you to move? I’ll carry you on my back if you’re having trouble.”

“....Don’t treat me like a kid.”

“Hmm, I’m sorry if you were offended.”

Add couldn’t say a thing anymore when Rena apologized while smiling brightly. He somehow got caught up in Rena’s pace whenever he talked to her.

“Anyways, where’s Eve? I have something to talk to her about.”

“Didn’t she come to your room earlier? You guys must have missed each other.”

Add thought things would get complicated if he explained the situation in detail so he just kept silent and just nodded. Rena spoke proudly.

“Eve was also very worried about you. She said she didn’t think you’d fight so desperately. It looked like she changed her opinion of you.”

“.....Don’t say something useless.”

Rena didn’t seem offended at all by Add’s blunt remark.

“Then should I go ask the other people about where Eve is?”

“It’s fine. It’s not that big of a deal.”

Add spoke then started to walk away. This was something that could be solved easily by meeting and talking with Eve quietly.

Eve was a Nasod, this problem can be resolved easily by talking to her with reason.

“Hey Add.”

“What?”

Add answered without stopping his steps. Rena behind him finished her words.

“Thank you.”

“.....It’s nothing.”

Add didn’t know what she was thankful about and could have ignored her. But he answered accordingly regardless. He had a pretty good guess at what face Rena was making without having to turn around.

She’s probably smiling brightly.

I absolutely hate noisy places. Add frowned as he pushed through the crowds of people. Then unexpectedly, he gradually started to feel better.

Elder’s citizens were all busy laughing, talking and drinking with smiles on their faces. Honestly, it didn’t matter at all to Add whether they were happy or sad but.....This was a scene he hadn’t seen before.

After repeatedly time traveling, Add was finally successful in changing the future.

He protected Eve and liberated Elder.

The sense of realism finally started to sink in. Add's heart throbbed for some reason. He stopped walking and looked above towards the sky. He didn't dislike today's sky dyed in red by the setting sun.

It was definitely different sky from the one in his memories dyed in red by the flames.

"Kukukuk, it seems I became sentimental too."

Add mocked himself as he lowered his gaze. Since he created the result he wanted, it was time to enjoy the result. But he couldn't even begin to guess where Eve could be. Should he have accepted Rena's offer to help after all?

"...."

If Add did that, Rena will find out how he was with naked Ara(actually Eun) alone in the room. He wanted to minimize the amount people who knew about that incident. Since it's going to become annoying to explain.

"That damned fox...."

Doing the legwork by himself was the best solution. Add muttered and was about to start moving again. But then he heard a sound of familiar squabbling.

"I told you I like apple juice better."

"And I told you already that lemonade is better for your health."

Add was dumbfounded after discovering a boy and girl that were squabbling in front of the snacks bar. But he started to approach them regardless.

"That's sour. Can't we just get different things? Why are you trying to force me to drink that?"

"Because it will be over budget. Didn't I tell you already that your spending habits are bad?"

Red haired boy and the perfect Nasod. The store owner was watching the two of them argue with a merry smile. It wasn't just the store owner, people around were also watching them with a peculiar smile.

Add was about to approach the two but stopped after noticing the surrounding atmosphere. Add stared at them vacantly together with the crowd of people that were observing.

They were squabbling over something trivial like a juice price.....but it was a scene that looked like they suited each other well. That's probably why surrounding people were watching over them with a smile.

Ba-dump

“....”

After getting swallowed by an unexplainable sense of distaste, Add struggled with the choices that conflicted with one another in his heart. A thought of wanting to go talk to Eve like he had originally intended and a thought of wanting to turn around and leave this place. Add suppressed these two thoughts that furiously conflicted with one another in his heart.

He didn't know if this was the right choice, but his feet were already moving forwards.

“Kukukuk, can't you just buy both? Could it be that you're short on money?”

“Oh, Big brother Add. You're awake?”

Elsword turned around and spoke lightly. After answering him with a slight head gesture, Add stole a glance at Eve.

Eve was expressionless as always. She didn't say anything after seeing Add. Elsword chatted to him instead.

“You think apple juice is better too right?”

“Can't you just buy them separately? Why do you have to buy pair of the same thing?”

Well seeing the menu board, there was a discount for buying the same menu for two people. Were they arguing because they couldn't spare couple of cents?

When Add stared back at them with a sense of disbelief. Eve explained.

“Elsword lacks sense of economy. So I have to manage it.”

“....Who was it that didn't buy water and foods and almost made me dry up to death again?”

“Nasods don't have particular problems with lack of food or water.”

“I have lots of problems!! Not only that, even when you finally started buying foods, you've been only giving me plants!!”

Elsword seemed he had pent up complaints. But Eve looked like she didn't understand why things he mentioned were problematic.

“It was a diet that perfectly took into accounts both price and amounts of nutrients. Why are you so unhappy about that?”

“It tastes bad!! It really tastes bad!!”

Elsword must have been really resentful. But Eve responded while nodding with an expression that she couldn’t understand at all.

“Come to think of it, I noticed that humans perform something useless called cooking.... I can’t understand such act at all. But it’s not like I forbid you from cooking.”

“How can you cook with just plants?! At least allow me to buy some seasoning!! We also ran out of salt!”

“I deemed it as an unworthy product for purchase considering the amount contained in such a little bottle for its price”

The two now started bringing up old stories as they argued again. The store owner was looking at them with a merry smile and the other people watching in the crowd were the same.

But despite this surrounding atmosphere, Add felt unpleasant and quietly ordered some juices from the store owner. After purchasing an apple juice and lemonade according to the two’s wishes, Add held them out towards the two.

“Here it’s all good now right?”

“Wow! Thank you Big brother Add!”

Elsword accepted with a smile but Eve didn’t accept. She stared at Add with a strange gaze.

“Kukukuk, how long are you going to make me hold this?”

“Elsword will get bad habits. Try to watch out next time.”

Eve accepted the lemonade after she spoke. Elsword frowned at her words but didn’t argue back anymore. It seemed he didn’t want to ruin the pleasant mood while they drank their juices.

“Well, then....”

He found Eve and even managed to resolve her argument with Elsword. Add stole a glance at Eve who was drinking lemonade and thought about his next course of action.

They would have to talk in private in order to clear up the misunderstanding from before....How should he go about doing this?

“Big brother Add, aren’t you going to drink?”

“I don’t feel like it.”

Elsword nodded when Add answered half heartedly.

“Oh, that’s right. Eve brought you one right?”

“What?”

“I didn’t.”

Three of their words didn’t connect. Elsword looked at Eve as if he couldn’t understand.

“But you bought one earlier for him as a get well gif....”

“I drank that one myself”

“Cherry ai....”

“I drank that one.”

Eve cut off Elsword’s words with a stiff tone. Elsword scratched his head and sent Add a gaze asking what happened.

What happened? He got caught being together with half naked Ara(Again, Eun).

“Should I go talk with Big sister Rena for a bit?”

Seeing the lack of response from Add, Elsword sighed and stepped back. Eve was staring at her lemonade as if she hadn’t heard anything.

Add understood why Elsword brought up those words right now and became quite surprised. To think he’d read the atmosphere and leave by himself. So it wasn’t just his size that grew?

“....Just go ask when we’ll be leaving this place.”

“Alright, I’ll go ask.”

Elsword sent Eve a worried look for a moment then nodded as he turned around. Eve still didn’t say anything even after Elsword disappeared through the crowd.

They were now alone like Add wanted.... But for some reason his head started to ache.

“Let’s change places....”

For some reason, the gazes of people that were watching them started to become more excited. Eve slightly moved her eyes to stare at Add at this suggestion to talk somewhere else in private

For some reason Add felt very uncomfortable.

When Add was suppressing his uneasy heart while waiting for her answer, Eve wordlessly started to walk. Add realized late that this was a sign of approval and quickly started to follow her.

A feeling that something seriously went wrong and a feeling of unknown uneasiness got mixed up inside his complicated heart.....But this wasn't something he could avoid.

The top of Wally's Castle watchtower. It was a place with cool breeze.

"....Why did they give so much?"

Add was taken aback at all the snacks and drinks that filled his arms. Of course, he didn't buy them because he had a sudden urge to eat.

Someone asked Add as he followed Eve if he was an El Search Party member and he answered yes without any particular thought. Then it turned out like this.

Well, the El Search Party fought in the front lines during the battle to overthrow Wally. They played an instrumental role in the battle so it was obvious for them to be treated well like this.

Eve had arrived before him and stood behind the castle walls looking out into the distance. Add carefully dropped the foods as he stood beside the girl who was watching the sunset.

Eve still didn't say anything. Add was forced to speak first.

"You could have got many drinks as you wanted if you said you're from the El Search Party."

"Elsword will get bad habits."

Eve's tone was as if she already knew that. Nothing good could come from bringing up Elsword in a conversation with Eve.....but he had already started this conversation.

"Guys are supposed to grow up with bad habits. Kukuk"

"I would at least like him to not get into the habit of stealing."

Eve finally turned her head towards Add. Add unknowingly winced at her cold gaze.

"I don't plan to tell anyone about what you were doing with Ara Haan. You don't need to worry."

"....That's was a complete misunderstanding."

"Even I know what it means for human male and female to be together without clothes."

It was only Ara(For her sake, let's correct this as Eun) that was naked. Add's head started to hurt extremely from facing Eve's stiff attitude.

Objectively, what Eve said was right. It was futile to pass this as a misunderstanding. Add didn't know what he could say to make Eve understand this situation. Anything he said felt like they'd only sound like excuses.

‘.....Why do I have to suffer through this?’

Add asked himself as he let out a fake cough.

“I told you it's not like that. You should already know that I was unconscious.”

“I have no idea what you mean.”

“.....”

Add couldn't continue his words at such an absurd reply. Eve spoke with a tone as if she didn't say anything wrong.

“Doesn't doing something like that with Ara Haan means that you weren't injured?”

.....Was that sarcasm? Add's heart instantly got lifted up in delight. No way. She can even make sarcastic remarks? She was one unimaginably delicately constructed Nasod.

Eve's stare became much colder when Add made a delightful face.

“This story is over.”

“Wait. It's not over yet.”

Add was so burned up in his desire for research that he was late in coming to his senses and replied hastily. But Eve's attitude was that she had finished all she had to say. Her head was turned around looking forwards again.

“.....First of all. I definitely don't have that kind of relationship with Ara.”

He didn't know if she'd believe him but there was no choice but to speak out. Ah... he almost felt like turning back time to before Eve entered that room.

“Is that so? Then what kind of relationship do you have?”

“.....”

His throat felt dry. Add picked up one of the drinks below his feet without looking at its label, opened the drink and gulped it down. He couldn't even tell what flavor it was because he was thinking too desperately to solve this situation.

To make Eve understand, it was faster for her to meet Eun. But knowing Eun's personality, would she take Add's side during the explanation? He couldn't imagine Eun doing so.

Then Add could just explain about Eun himself. But that would complicate the story. He'd have to explain why he was having secret talks with Eun, then about how he found out about Eun's existence within Ara.

If the story got deeper, he'd have to reveal about time travel too. That was.....

"I said I won't tell anyone about your relationship with Ara Haan."

For some reason, Eve emphasized this again after seeing that Add wasn't able to answer. Eve spoke clearly facing Add's gaze.

"So you don't have to worry about Rena finding out."

"Even if Rena knew....."

Knowing Rena's personality, I don't think she'd forbid it? Of course she'd give Add a strict warning but...

No. He didn't have anything with Ara in the first place..... Add muttered in his head then he heard Eve's next words and froze up.

"Aren't you doing this because it would be troublesome for you to advance your relationship with Rena?"

".....What?"

Add finally started coming to his senses after seeing Eve's cold stare.

So how Eve understood this situation right now was.....

1. Add and Ara were together in the same room. For reference, Ara was naked.
2. Add was afraid of this getting known so he followed Eve in order to stop her from talking about this to anyone.
3. Add's reason for No.2 is because he doesn't want Rena to find out about No.1
4. The reason Add wants No.3 is because he wants to do the same thing in No.1 with Rena someday.
5. Womanizer Add.

It was a mess even if you tried organizing it in numbers. So she thinks that Add wants the incident with Ara to remain a secret because he has a desire to do indecent things with Rena?

“.....Just what kind of delusion is that?”

Unlike what he just said, a dry sweat was dripping down Add’s back. He realized that Eve hadn’t just misunderstood, she had misunderstood gravely.

“Rena is extremely beautiful.”

“I know that, but you seem to have a strange delusion.”

Add’s senses returned after he spoke this out loud for the second time. Eve continued to explain calmly.

“I think all human males would turn their gaze towards Rena. And in reality, all of the human males’ reactions were the same.”

“No, No.....”

Add shook his head. Of course, he admitted that Rena was beautiful and she was easy to be around with.

“And you and Rena looked very close together.”

“.....I told you it’s not like that!”

Add suddenly shouted. If someone else had said these things, he would have just laughed it off and wouldn’t have cared. But for some reason that he couldn’t understand, he reacted like this when he heard this from Eve.

It felt suffocating.

“Is it not?”

“Yes, it’s honestly not!!”

Eve expressionlessly stared at Add. He couldn’t tell if she believed him just by looking at her face. Add scratched his head and spoke clumsily.

“Rena and I.....that is....we happened to spend lots of time working together for this mission. There’s nothing more. Do you understand?”

“Well, although this actually doesn’t have anything to do with me.”

Add received a cold reply from an explanation he struggled so much to say. Feeling depressed, Add couldn’t think of what to do. He somehow started getting angry.

So cruel.

“How can you say that? Just who do you think.....Who do you think I’m doing all of this for?

“Who is it for?”

Add’s head started getting heated even though he knew he shouldn’t answer. Add clenched his fists then opened his mouth.....But he shut his mouth after seeing Eve who was staring straightly at him.

“.....”

He couldn’t say it. That he fought without caring about ways and means in order to prevent her from getting destroyed. That he even tried sending other members to their deaths in order to do so.

That he was even willing to join hands with a strange being in order to achieve that goal.

He couldn’t say it.

“....I can’t say it.”

It wasn’t because he thought that Eve wouldn’t understand even if he told her. He just shouldn’t say this. Add instinctively decided to himself.

He was finally able to surpass all the hardships and avoided the result of Eve getting destroyed. He didn’t intend on bringing up the past events anymore.

Even if she didn’t understand, even if she misunderstood, it didn’t matter. Add could only nod in response.

“Fine. Think whatever you want. Tell Rena if you want to. Do whatever you want.”

“I already said I had no intentions to tell.”

“I said do whatever you want!!!”

Add barely managed to hold back his temper after seeing Eve wince at his abrupt shout. His head had already finished the calculations and made the decision.....but his heart couldn’t follow.

Nothing good was going to come from continuing this conversation. Add was about to turn around but stopped. Something held his hand.

Eve had stretched out her hand to grab his.

“Do you have....something more to talk about?”

“There’s something else we have to talk about.”

Add stopped and stood still at Eve’s words while thinking about what more could they possibly talk about.

Maybe I should apologize for shouting.....

“How do you know about Junk Break?”

His throat got clogged up.

Eve stared straightly at Add who was frozen stiff. Eve waited for a while then asked an additional question when Add couldn't answer.

“How do you know about the skill that I haven’t used once since I joined the El Search Party? And also so accurately? Up to the detail of how I couldn’t move for a while after using it.”

“....That’s.”

Eve’s doubt was obvious. Since the event from the time when Eve destroyed Wally Robot with Junk Break doesn’t exist anymore. He will obviously look suspicious if Add acted like he knew the skill.

But Add was in such a dire situation when facing the Shadow Master that he couldn’t think about this at the time.

Eve waited quietly for Add’s answer. Keeping silent would only look more suspicious.

“Kukukuk, there are ways to know....”

“What are those ways?”

He trailed his words on purpose to buy more time but she asked back immediately. It seems he couldn’t get out of this easily.

Add desperately ran his brain. Add’s future plan was to satisfy his grudge by making Eve who only looked at Elsword turn around to look at him instead.....Then steal her Core. Getting suspicions from Eve here wasn’t going to help his future plans at all.

“I’m actually an engineer.”

“I already know that.”

This was something he had already revealed the day when the El Search Party was formed when they were introducing themselves. But Add shook his head.

“This story is going to get long. Aren’t you thirsty?”

Add grabbed a random drink that was under his feet and held it out to Eve. How should he say this story to avoid suspicion? This drink was mainly a method to buy more time, but he was actually thirsty too.

“Nasods don’t have any problems operating without water.”

“Drink some anyways. It’s not a story I can bring up easily.”

When Add insisted, Eve took the drink and brought it to her mouth. Looking at her sideways, Add also drank his juice.

Random story he made up on the spot wouldn’t make sense anyways. Then he just have to give her part of the truth.

“My family researched Nasods for generations.”

“You had a family?”

Eve made an expression as if this was unexpected. Add answered her question with a head gesture then continued his story while recalling his past memories.

“Our family secretly passed down knowledge of Nasods for generations. So I also know a lot about Nasods. I probably know more about them than you.”

“That’s impossible.”

Eve thought this was nonsense and looked offended. Add felt that Eve bought his story and made a cold grin on purpose.

“Doesn’t the fact that I know you can use Junk Break already prove it? Don’t make light of the history us humans have built up upon generations. In some sense, I can say that I know more about you than you know yourself.

“....”

Eve looked distressed. Add didn’t say anything and continued to drink his juice. What he said right now was something he wove up in order to avoid Eve’s suspicion.....but in some sense, it was true.

All of Eve’s appearances that Eve from this timeline hadn’t shown. That is, Eve’s appearances from other timelines. Add remembered every one of them vividly.

Even how Eve disappeared into the light covering for Elsword.

“That’s end the story. Are you curious about anything else? Should I tell you about your battle abilities in more detail?”

Add made a cynical remark so he wouldn't look suspicious. Eve shook her head after thinking deeply.

"It's hard to believe there was a family that knew so deeply about Nasods....But it must be true. It's quite surprising."

Eve must have withdrawn her suspicions after hearing Add's explanation. It was information that went beyond Eve's common sense. But she seems to have at least accepted it.

Add breathed a sigh of relief but froze after hearing her next question.

"May I meet with your family?"

"....Why would you want to do that?"

Add could tell clearly that his own voice had turned sharp. But Eve's voice remained calm.

"If they researched about Nasods this deeply, then I could maybe get some hints about reviving the Nasod civilization from them. I would like to speak with not only you, but your family as well."

"That's impossible."

It wasn't because Add's family was in the past.

"They're all dead."

Because they were not of this world anymore. Eve blinked for a while at Add's reply then spoke carefully.

"I'm sorry."

"No, don't be. Humans tend to die easily. Kahaha."

Add chugged the juice down his throat after laughing. He never had any alcoholic beverages before but he wanted to drink some right now.

"Because Elsword was so nostalgic when he spoke about his sister so.... Losing such family must have been really difficult. I was thoughtless."

Eve shouldn't be able to sympathise with human's death, with family's death, yet she was honestly apologizing. Add was extremely surprised at this reaction and yet frowned at the name that popped up again.

"....Elsword again?"

"I learned many things from him as we traveled together. Family is one of them."

"I see."

Add felt displeased but he didn't speak anymore. Eve gets angry if he spoke ill about Elsword.

This was a precious time he earned after preventing Eve's destruction. He didn't want to build a bad relationship with Eve.

"Although he's thoughtless, reckless, impatient and idiotic..... He's helpful sometimes."

"That sounds like a compliment."

"It's an overly generousCompliment for him"

Eve had her eyes narrowed and seemed to be nodding off. Add wondered about this sudden strange reaction from her.....Eve rubbed her half closed eyes.

"This is strange. My bodily functions are decreasing suddenly."

"This is the first time I heard about Nasods not getting enough sleep."

Nasods could continue functioning without eating or breathing. On the other hand, they could eat, breathe and sleep if they wanted to.

Conditions that were essential for humans to survive were optional for Nasods.

"....I can see two of you. Why is that?"

Just when Add was beginning to realize that Eve's condition was strange..... Eve's body tilted sideways. Surprised, Add reached out his hands to catch her.

Plop.

Eve basically fell sideways plunged her face into Add's chest. Add couldn't believe this situation and couldn't move as he was stunned by such an unexpected turnout.

"Could this be....?"

Could it be that something happened to her as an after effect of the battle? Add's heart sank as he examined Eve's condition. Then he was able to find out something unexpected.

Eve's eyes were closed and she was fast asleep. She wouldn't even know if someone were to carry her away.

"....Hey."

She didn't wake up even when he called her. Add looked down at the girl in his arms and thought about what he should do.

She was completely defenceless.

1. Use this chance to steal the core.
2. Use this chance to take the core.
3. Use this chance to.....

Add numbly organized his thoughts as he repeatedly questioned himself but he couldn't make up the next part of the sentence.

Anyways, this was an important chance. He could even take Eve and run off right now.

But of course, he was already determined to only steal the Core only after he made her look around. He went through all that trouble after all.....

“But just touching them should be fine....”

Add couldn't suppress his curiosity and slightly touched Eve's forehead where the Core was with the tip of his hand. It was smooth.

“Hmm..... So this is.”

Add unknowingly licked his lips at the treasure in his hands. Add's hand was stroking the Core then in one moment, his hand touched a part of her skin.

“T, this is.....”

What a surprisingly soft feeling. He had thought already from the point when he saw her skin that she was perfect. But this was basically no different from a human. Add went ahead and stroked various parts of Eve's face in admiration.

Of course, it would be troublesome if she woke up so he touched only touched slightly.

The tip of Add's hand went down to her chin then started moving up but stopped. Eve's lips were in the hand's trajectory.

“....”

Eve's face and her body were basically no different from a human. Then probably....her lips would be the same as well? So many questions came up in his mind in that instant. Add unknowingly hesitated for a moment but daringly moved his hands up.

A researcher couldn't back down in front of his test subject. Even if it lead to something irrevocable.

Just when Add's fingertips were about to touch Eve's lips.

“Big brother Add? What are you doing over there?”

A familiar voice came from behind him. It was Elsword.

“....”

See? Something irrevocable.

Add thought desperately while carrying Eve. Just what could he say to fool Elsword? Should he just attack first and turn him into minced meat?

Just when Add was confirming that no one else was watching. Elsword grabbed a drink from bottom of Add’s feet and drank it without any signs of doubt.

“Wow, this is good. It’s peach flavor.”

“....”

“Why are you looking at me like that Big brother Add?”

Elsword who was drinking peach juice gave Add a gaze asking if there was something wrong.

Just when Add was struggling to figure out how to react, Elsword stared at Eve in Add’s arms and scratched his head.

“Eve looks like she can’t keep herself up. Did something happen?”

“That’s....”

Yes Add was so distracted by this sudden chance that he hadn’t had the time to think about this. Why did this suddenly happen to Eve? Add quickly remembered that Eve had drank something and examined its contents.

Sour but somewhat pleasant smell, it was alcohol.

“.....She drank alcohol.”

“Oh, she did? Then she probably won’t get up for a while.”

Elsword replied as if it was nothing. It sounded like he had experienced this before. Add became displeased at this fact and asked Elsword quietly.

“Did this happen before?”

“She drank it one time by mistake. She fell asleep quickly.”

It was illogical for Nasods to be affected by an external liquid and get their functions diminished. But since Eve was a Nasod ever so close to human, she could be somewhat different. He should be able to find out how her metabolism worked if he could just dissect her.

“Isn’t it heavy carrying Eve? Should I carry her?”

“....She’s not heavy at all.”

When Elsword held out his arms, Add instinctively increased the force on his arms carrying Eve and slightly backed off. As if he didn’t want Elsword to touch her.

“Really? It’s going to be heavy if you keep carrying her like that. You should bring her to her room.”

“.....Shall I?”

Add was about to take Elsword up on his suggestion then stopped. Why was Elsword making this suggestion?

Come to think of it, Elsword and Eve were traveling together even before the El Search Party was formed. Also, Eve who did not have any emotions (really?) got very angry if someone spoke ill about Elsword.

That was the proof that Eve thought of Elsword as someone important to her.

“You....”

But how did Elsword think about Eve? Add couldn’t help but to ask even though he thought that it was a stupid thing to ask.

“How do you think of Eve?”

“Friend.”

Elsword answered without any hesitation despite Add’s sudden question. Add couldn’t respond right away to such a clean and refreshing answer.

But that wasn’t the end of Elsword’s answer.

“She’s a precious friend of mine. During our journey, whenever I was having difficult times, whenever I was sad, she was always beside me. Of course she’d still be my friend even if she didn’t do that.....But she’s now my precious friend.”

There was a shadow on Elsword’s face unlike the Elsword that Add had known. Add couldn’t help but to reply in a twisted way.

“All that and you’re just friends?”

“She’s a precious friend.”

When Add responded sarcastically, Elsword became serious and glared back at him. The way how he got angry when someone touched upon his relationship with Eve..... How can they be so similar?

Add was at a loss for words and couldn't continue attacking. Elsword quietly drank his juice. Add took a side glance at Elsword and bit his lips at his leisurely attitude.

What had gone back and forth was a very clean conversation.....But Add felt a strange sense of defeat.

Come to think of it, this was the first time Add had such an in depth conversation with someone in the El Search Party other than Eve. Even when he was talking with Rena, it only looked in depth because of Rena's conversational skills. The details of the conversations were basically Add coming up with a plan and using Rena as means to accomplish his goals.

Wasn't this obvious though? Add's goal was solely Eve's Core. He didn't care about the other party members. Also, Elsword was always an eye sore for him.

Add thought of various methods to relieve himself of this vexing feeling.

Run away with Eve in front of his eyes? Just suppress his feelings and walk away? Or even use time travel to erase this event.....but none of those methods were satisfactory.

"What are you thinking by leaving such a precious friend to me? What if I pretended to go to the room and instead...."

Add was trying to instill some sense of danger into Elsword but stopped after realizing that this was a stupid thing to say. If he was really going to do such things, nothing was more stupid than saying it out loud like this.

"Well, Eve is stronger than me. And even without that, it doesn't look like Big brother Add would do something bad to Eve."

"What?"

Did this guy get a brain tumor as he grew up? Add even let out an empty laugh but Elsword stood firm to his beliefs.

"People with that kind of face don't do bad things."

"What kind of face am I making?"

"Do I have to explain?"

Elsword's tone was as if he didn't want to say it. It was such a mature reaction totally unlike the stupid brat Add had met in the beginning.

When Add kept his mouth shut in strange sense of defeat, Elsword opened up another drink.

“So please take Eve to her room. There won’t be any problems after she sleeps for the night.”

“....Why are you letting me do this?”

Add felt like he got pushed back more each time he spoke out, but still couldn’t help but to ask.

Elsword didn’t ponder at this question either and answered right away.

“Because you’re making a face like you want to.”

“....”

Add shut his mouth and started to move his Dynamos.

El Search Party, girl’s bedroom.

Shake.

The bed shook lightly when he dropped Eve. Add saw the bed shake and let out a sigh. The sun had set already and it was night but it was still noisy outside the window. It looked like they were going to party all night.

“Hmph....”

Add was about to close the window but stopped after realizing that doing so would make the room dark. Turning on the lights was also an option but he didn’t want to put in such an effort when he was going to leave right away. Add looked at the now fast asleep Eve as she was shined upon by the moonlight.

Eve slept soundly curled up on the bed. Of course, she was a Nasod and didn’t need to breathe so just staring at her felt like he was watching an inorganic doll.

So human like. Nasod more beautiful than anything else in the world.

An existence Add and Add’s family had always ultimately strived for. Also an existence that will grant him the technology to achieve his goal of returning to the past.

For Add who was basically an orphan in this age, you could say that Eve meant everything to Add. That’s why he entered the El Search Party that he had absolutely no interest in or had no reason to join. Only because Eve was in it.....and....

“Let’s stop.”

She wouldn’t believe his story about time travel and he couldn’t reveal it. Just the fact that everyone combined their strengths and defeated Shadow Master meant the entire world right now. Only that fact needed to remain true.

This is the time he went through hell to achieve. Let's not waste it.

Add let out a sigh and finally thought about leaving the room....but that was merely a thought. His feet were glued to the ground as he looked down at Eve.

“Why am I like this....?”

Add wiped the slight amount of sweat that had gathered on his forehead. It wasn't intended it but he had already seen a girl's naked body recently.

So then why was he so flustered over merely a sight of Eve sleeping in front of him?

“Is it because I've become much closer to achieving my goal?”

Add stoked his chin as he questioned himself.

That's right. Come to think of it, he now knew about Eve's complete weakness. Since he knew now that she's weak to alcoholic beverages, he could handle this in one go later if he used this information right.

“Kukukuk, good, this is great....”

He was reacting differently right now because he had learned some very good information. Add believed he was successful in explaining his feelings and laughed enjoyably.

Although his legs still couldn't move.

“Rena....won't come right now right?”

Rena should have to talk with other people as the El Search Party's representative so she should come back late. He didn't know where Ara was but it seemed she wouldn't come back any time soon.

Then there shouldn't be any problems if he stayed here a bit longer.

After making his decision, Add sat on the middle of the bed with his back towards Eve. It was a rare quiet moment, let's collect some thoughts.

This was the time he was able to arrive in with much hardship, the present where Eve was safe. He couldn't waste this time.

“Then what should I do next....?”

“Next is Feita.”

Add was startled by the voice that suddenly came from the window. Fox ears on top of white hair, even before he had realized, Eun was standing pompously on the balcony's railing.

How long was she there watching? Add tried to get up from his spot in surprise but Eun spoke without any hint of smile on her face.

“Our next destination has been decided as Feita, keep that in mind, boy.”

Eun spoke those lines then disappeared with a jump. She was dropping towards the ground but Add didn’t think Eun would get injured.

“....What was that?”

Eun would normally tease him by bringing up every possible reason. It was uncomfortable to see her just tell him the main point then disappear like that.

Was he thinking like this because he got teased by her so much? Anyways, Eun wasn’t the type to speak lightly about serious topics....So their next destination really must be Feita.

There must be nothing wrong in Bethma.

Then does that mean he’ll be traveling with Eve at least until then?

“I see.....”

Add sighed and started to move. It would be troublesome if he remained here longer and got caught by Rena. And he already got caught by Ara(Eun borrowing her body).

Tilt.

Add started to get up but lost his balance and staggered. Add’s body froze up when he looked back in curiosity.

The tip of Eve’s hand as she slept on her side was grabbing onto Add’s hand. She must have grabbed it unconsciously.

“What is this?”

Add tried to pull his hand away but Eve’s hand didn’t let him go. Add tried couple of times to get free but realized that he couldn’t escape from Eve’s grasp easily.

Do I have to wake her up? Although she was asleep from the alcohol’s effect, she’d probably wake up if he really tried to wake her. Although she was so much like human, she was a Nasod in the end.

Add struggled in his mind but looked down at the sleeping Eve and let out a sigh. He didn’t feel up to it.

“Really....doing something so unexpected.”

Add gave up standing while letting Eve’s hand continue to grab onto his.

Staying standing up while being grabbed was a waste of stamina, and waking her up was another type of waste. There was no choice but to sit with her. If Rena came back and saw this, she'd misunderstand and act annoyingly. But those were all stuff that could happen later.

“Why do I have to do this....?”

Add muttered as he slightly looked back. Eve slept with her body curled up while grabbing onto Add's hand. She somehow looked more at peace than before.

It's probably just his imagination. Add forcefully moved his gaze forwards and spoke to himself.

“I'm not a knight....but I'll lend you my hand. So sleep well, my Queen.”

Finishing his words after only saying this much didn't suit his tastes. So Add purposely made an unpleasant remark with a violent tone.

“Since I'm going to devour all of you when you wake up.”

What Add desired was to return to the far past that he escaped from.

Eve was merely a method he needed to achieve that goal.

Even lending his hand to her right now was merely a whim of the person who possessed overflowing amount of resource called time.

“That's right, this is just....”

Just a whim of his.



4. Butterfly Effect

Feita.

It was a small town that the El Search Party arrived at after leaving Elder. This city built on an open terrain was quieter and less populous than Elder.

“Wow, look! Ms. Butterfly is flying around!”

“Stop moving around so much Ara Haan.”

“Yawwn, I’m so tired. Is anyone else tired? I’m also hungry.”

Rena who walked in front of the group made a bitter smile. Everyone must be tired after not being able to rest in a proper inn for days since they’ve left Elder.

“Alright, I’ll go to Mr. Lento and listen to their current situation so.....”

While talking to the other members as the leader of the party, Rena stopped her words in middle of her sentence and stared at Add with a profound gaze. Add tried to ignore it....but couldn’t withstand the pressure when Rena continued to stare at him.

“.....I’ll look after the kids so go ahead.”

“Alright, I’ll leave it to you.”

Rena smiled brightly and walked off with light footsteps. Add grinded his teeth as he saw Rena disappear into the crowds of people.

Back in Elder, ever since he fell fast asleep after lending his hand to Eve..... Rena was acting like this ever since she witnessed that scene. Add for some reason couldn’t help but to be obedient even though all she did was just smile at him while not saying anything.

“Such nonsense.”

Add could retort if she said something; fight back if she provoked him. But he didn’t know how to react when she kept gently smiling at him. Add ended up not being able to disobey Rena before long.

No, it didn’t end with just that.....he ended up responding according to Rena’s wishes just like what happened now. Add sighed and looked behind him.

“Wow, wow.....!!”

Ara was looking up in wonder at the butterfly that sat on tip of her spear.

“It’s a small city.”

Eve was sitting on her gears looking around at Feita's inner town and Elsword had his sword against his back while tapping the ground with his feet.

"Woa, Waaah!!!"

Ara let out a disappointed shout as the butterfly left her spear. Then for some reason she stretched out her spear towards the butterfly. It wasn't actually Ara simply stretching out her spear. The sound of wind tearing showed how much force was in her stab.

"It's dangerous Big sister Ara."

Elsword quickly swung his sword to hit the shaft of Ara's spear. The spear's trajectory was changed thanks to this interference and the butterfly was safe.

Ara whose face had turned deathly pale even though she was the one who had stabbed with the spear let out a sigh of relief after seeing the butterfly flutter away safely.

"Thank you, Mr.Elsword."

"It's nothing. By the way, do we have to wait here?"

"I already spoke with Rena beforehand. Let's go to the inn...."

Add was looking over the group then started to move his steps unwillingly. He was in the end just an unwilling leader.

"Phew...."

After letting out a sigh, Add took a slight glance towards Eve who walked behind him to the right. Eve either didn't notice his gaze or was ignoring it. Regardless, she walked silently.

When they started off from Elder, Rena had already made a very detailed travel plan and even reserved an inn beforehand. The reason Add knew this was because Rena mentioned this to him as if he should remember this.

Guys and girls got separate rooms so Add ended up sharing a room with Elsword. This happened so many times now that Add didn't have any desire to protest anymore.

After letting down his bag on the bed, Elsword looked out at the Feita's streets through the window.

"When should we eat? Aren't you hungry?"

"Big brother Add, isn't this place a bit strange?"

A sudden question. But regardless of how Add disliked Elword, Elsword never brought up anything that was baseless.

“What is? Places where people live all tend to be alike.”

“That’s what’s strange. This place looks same as any other towns.”

Elsword turned his head around from the window and stared at Add seriously.

“Didn’t we come here because we heard that Feita was invaded by Demons? Then why is it so quiet?”

“....”

Elsword’s indication was correct. There were urgent reports coming in from all over the continent that Demons were appearing through the Dimension Gate and causing mayhem. The reason the El Search Party left Elder was because they got an urgent call for reinforcements from Feita.

“I’m glad that the city is safe. But I can’t see any signs of fear or fatigue on the people’s faces. Streets are also extremely clean. I don’t think they defeated the Demons by fighting them off on their own.”

“They could have gone to another city.”

“I don’t know too much about this. But that Dimension Gate, isn’t that something that doesn’t open too easily?”

For Demons to appear in Elrios continent they needed to create a portal called Dimension Gate and this consumed Dark El. Also, this Dark El was something very scarce so Demons couldn’t use it carelessly. This was what Eun told Add before.

“They took the effort to invade Feita then went somewhere else without doing any damage? Isn’t that strange?”

“You’re right....”

Add’s face turned grim too. Other El Search Party members were all very surprised at the news that Demons were invading the Elrios continent. But Add wasn’t particularly surprised. It was a rather an expected event for Add.

‘Thinking about it now.... coming after Eve must have been a signal flare for the Demon invasion.’

Demons had decided for unknown reason to destroy Eve the Queen of Nasods before they properly started their invasion of the Elrios continent. That’s why they deployed Demons to where Eve was.

In this timeline, the El Search Party was able to prevent Eve’s destruction thanks to Add’s directions. Did the Demons give up destroying Eve when they failed and decided to go ahead with their invasion first?

Would he have heard this news if he remained in the timeline where Eve was destroyed?

'I don't know why they came after Eve but....'

Seeing how Eve looked surprised as well by the Demon invasion, it didn't look like Eve was hiding any secrets.

Add was deep in thought when Elsword's stare brought him to his senses.

"....Why are you looking at me like that?"

"Since Big brother Add is smart, I thought you might know something."

A calm response. Elsword's slight leisurely tone sounded unfittingly mature for his age.

"I'm not too sure either. But...."

Why were Demons invading the Elrios continent in such large scale? Well, you could roughly make the pieces fit by saying it's to obtain the El or by saying Demons were evil beings in the first place but these theories were somewhat doubtful.

The key to this answer was Eve. Just why did they go out of their way to send assassins to such far off place like Elder? And also....

'He said D...'

The one that ordered Dark Count Ran to destroy Eve. You could say that Shadow Master was sent by the same person also. Did D give up on sending assassins against Eve now?

"I'll have to observe a bit more."

"Tell me if you figure out something."

Elsword finished lightly then headed to the door after putting away his sword.

"Then let's eat first. Let's bring Eve and Big sister Ara and eat together."

"I'm fine."

Sitting and eating together with everyone was uncomfortable.

"Big brother Add is too skinny. You don't each that much in the first place. You won't grow any taller like that."

"I'm already tall enough."

"Eve is also going to eat with us. You should eat together with us too."

Why did he mention Eve here? Add frowned at the unexpected words but Elsword left the room as if it was decided.

“Then I’ll go get everyone.”

“Wait....”

Elsword disappeared without listening to Add trying to stop him. Add clicked his tongue annoyed at the meal table that was decided without his consent.

Add didn’t like socializing with others in the first place. Moreover, his personality didn’t fit with rest of the El Search Party members.

Ara who lost her mind over a single butterfly, Elsword who nobly covered for Ara’s mistake and Rena who overindulged those kids.....They were all opposite of Add’s personality.

If needed to, Add could tear apart something like a butterfly and laugh out loud. No, he could do it even if he didn’t need to.

“Hmph....”

Add sat on the bed and examined the condition of his Dynamos. He was doing maintenances whenever possible but he never had the time to do a feature expansion.

“I’d like to make the short distance space warp more fluent.”

The most important feature of the Dynamo was time travel. That is, its battle capabilities were more like extra features.

Of course, Add was extremely strong with just those extra features. Now that he can use Double, he was confident that he could defeat even Shadow Master in a 1 on 1 battle.

“So field is the problem after all? I’ll need to improve the features affiliated with Space Warp....”

Dimension Distortion mode, Optical Camouflage mode and so on, the Dynamo had so far put an emphasis on defensive features. But thinking about the fights that will continue on from now, he felt the need to enhance the offensive features. Double took too much toll on his body.

As he made plans for improving the Dynamo, Add suddenly pondered about the future. After the Demon invasion of the continent started, the El Search Party that were successful in defeating the Demons that invaded Elder(Although they had actually come for Eve) received a lot of attention. So they ended up being deployed to Feita.

If they achieved more feats in Feita....There was a pretty good chance that they’d get dragged into somewhere else.

“Finding the El won’t be important anymore. Kukuk.”

Other members' opinions was that they couldn't leave alone Demons that were trampling over the Elrios Continent(Ara agreed especially). Eve who shouldn't have much to do with this also didn't look like she had any discontents.

"Of course...."

Was it because Elsword had decided to join the fight?

Elsword and Eve had been traveling together before and it looked like they will continue to do so.

"Hmph."

Add stood up feeling dissatisfied. Why did he care?

Fights with Demons will continue regardless. Add just had to achieve his goal during the fight.

When Eve's eyes turn not towards Elsword but toward Add himself....Add will take Eve's Core without any hesitation.

"Kukukuk, that's right. Good, it's great."

There was possibility that Demons will come after Eve again. In that case, he'll just use the experience he gained from facing Shadow Master and defeat them again.

"Kahahaha!!"

Add felt delighted and let out a refreshing laugh with his arms wide open. His head that was clouded with many unknown information before was clear now.

"...."

Add laughed enjoyably for a while then slowly shut his mouth after finally noticing a silent gaze towards him. A door that had opened without a knock, Eve was standing on the doorsill.

Why didn't you tell me if you were watching?

Add was frozen and couldn't move, Eve composedly stated her business as if she hadn't seen anything.

"Meal is ready. Come downstairs."

"....Okay."

Add answered with a feeling of his throat drying up. Eve left right away as if she had no more business here now.

"Why is she acting like that?"

Eve's attitude was like that ever since he had fallen asleep while holding her hand. It didn't look too different since she was cold towards Add before....but he could feel a strange wall between them now.

"I thought I understood but I can't."

Well, that's why she spurred on his desire for research in the first place.

1st floor of the inn. Add, Eve, Elsword and Ara sat around the round table located in the corner of the floor and started to eat.

Four of their food preferences differed greatly. Elsword and Ara ate meat, Eve's foods were completely vegetarian and Add had a small appetite so he only ate appetizers.

"Why do you only eat vegetables Ms.Eve? Meat is tasty too."

"I heard that vegetarian diet is good for your health."

Eve replied calmly then added as if she just remembered.

"Although Nasods don't need to worry about health."

"Vegetables are expensive, they are way too expensive....."

"That's why I used my own expenses to buy you some vegetables. Was there a problem with that Elsword?"

Eve's voice turned slightly cold. Elsword was too focused with eating meat that he didn't realize this change and continued his complaints.

"Eating meat gives you strength to fight."

"That's true. I also ate a lot of meat since I was little!"

"Nutritional unbalance ruins the balance of your body. Didn't I warn you before?"

Elsword took a bite out of the meat he was holding then swallowed. He then let out a large sigh. They seemed to have argued about this topic since long before.

"What do you think Big brother Add? What's better to eat in order to fight?"

At this sudden question, Add stopped his hand that was scooping up soup with a spoon. Elsword's tone felt like he asked without much thought but Ara and Eve were now very attentive.

"Meat comes first for martial artists. That's the teaching of the Haan family."

“I also researched quite a bit into this. It’s better to reject careless consumption of meat and prioritize in vegetarian diet.”

Ara thought seriously at Eve’s response then shook her head.

“But strength is important for fighting. You can’t get any strength from eating vegetables.”

“Fighting isn’t done only through strength.”

Eve answered then looked vacantly at Add. That gaze seemed to be telling him to hurry up and back her up.

“.....Well, it’s true that fighting isn’t done only through strength.”

“Ah?! Then will it be better for me to consider eating vegetables after all?”

Ara became very surprised and asked. The way she disappointingly looked down at the meat on her plate seemed like she still had regrets.

“You don’t have much of a brain anyways. Only thing you know how to do is using strength so just eat whatever you want.”

“Ah, thank you for your advice Mr.Add. I’ll do just that.”

Ara smiled gently and continued her meal. Add had meant that as a taunt but it felt awkward now because he got way too fresh of a response back.

Eve stared at Add coldly then continued to eat her vegetables quietly. Elsword whose hand had stopped for a moment also started to chew on meat again. Only Add’s hands remained stopped from this oddly formed silence.

What was this odd atmosphere?

Could it be that they are calling into question how he mocked Ara? Although Ara herself was continuing to eat with merry expression.....The cold stare that Eve gave him hung on his mind.

Was it too harsh to say that all she had was strength after all? Ara was a girl too. He just had forgotten because he got teased by Eun so much and also have only seen Ara fighting courageously in the front lines.

“A....”

When Add opened his mouth again, all three of their gazes focused on him in unison. Add got startled by this unexpectedly heated reaction.

“Actually....”

How should he apologize? No, did he really need to apologize? Add tried to buy time as he thought of various solutions in his mind. The three of them only stared at Add without saying a word.

This is why I hate eating together with everyone.

Let's just get it over with. Just when Add was about to continue his words in a flat tone,

“Actually what I said before was too muc.....”

“Were you guys eating?”

Rena approached and spoke to them. Eve asked as she pulled out a remaining chair.

“Did everything go well, Rena?”

“Umm, that’s.....”

Rena didn't sit on the open chair and trailed her words. When the other members' gaze fixed on her as well, Rena took a slight glance behind her. A young man politely bowed his head towards the El Search Party.

“I think it would be better for you to listen to what Mr.Lento here says.”

“Nice to meet you, I'm the captain of the Feita's temple deployment unit Lento. Thank you for accepting our call for help.”

“No, I just did what I had to as a martial artist.”

Ara answered brightly but Lentos expression was dark. Shouldn't he be rejoiced that reinforcements had arrived?

Add noticed this and asked in a low voice.

“I thought you requested for help because Demons had invaded....But it seems you have a different problem. What is it?”

Add must have hit the mark because Lento did not answer right away. He looked at Rena once then looked at the El Search Party members in middle of their meal. Elsword was still continuing to eat.

“Actually.....It looks like the Demons have been defeated.”

“Kukukuk. That's a very peculiar way of saying it.”

Add accepted Lento's words while laughing. But Add's eyes were shining sharply. Judging by how Lento had said it, it wasn't him or anyone he knew that had defeated the Demons.

Then who did?

“Spit it all out since you called us all the way out here. Don’t stall for time.”

“Umm, Add?”

Add was speaking forcefully but stopped when Rena called out his name. Rena made a bright smile.

“I know how you feel but don’t press Mr.Lento too much. He’s just as confused about this.”

“.....I also have my situation so I cannot tell you everything.”

Lento then spoke again in a low voice.

“I would like all of you to go scout what happened to the Demons.”

Scouting mission.

Telling us to go find out what happened without giving any proper information. Add didn’t like this at all but Rena had accepted this mission on her own.

El Search Party’s leader was Rena. No one else objected to her decision so they ended up taking this mission.

Add was going up to his room after the meal then stopped walking. Soft footsteps were following him.

“Add? Are you angry?”

“I never said anything.”

Add didn’t stop his steps and headed to his room. But Rena also did the same. Add was about to open the door to the boy’s bedroom but saw Rena who was making a slight smile beside him and let out a sigh. She was about to follow him into the room if he didn’t talk.

“If you have something to say then say it already. Why have you been acting like this recently?”

“Hmm, that’s because Add is not telling me what he really wants to say.”

He didn’t understand what she meant. Anyways, it would better for them to avoid talking inside the room by themselves to avoid any unwanted misunderstandings. Add decided this and leaned on the door on his back. But he soon frowned after a moment of thought.

.....Why do I have to worry about getting misunderstood by someone else? It didn’t matter at all for him even if Eve misunderstood.

“How are things going with Eve?”

“....”

An abrupt topic, Add winced then forcedly let out a laugh.

“Kukukuk, I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“I’m asking about what Add thinks about Eve.”

“....”

Add withdrew his laugh at this sudden question that was thrown straight at him. He thought Rena was teasing him again but Rena was just smiling calmly.

“Do I have to report everything to you? And that shouldn’t have anything to do with the current mission.”

“As I thought. You didn’t like me taking this scouting mission after all.”

Add turned his eyes around when Rena made a bitter smile. Seriously, she wasn’t an Elf, she was a devil. Add started talking straightforwardly since his thoughts got found out anyways.

“I get that they are having trouble because Demons that took over Feita’s temple suddenly stopped moving. But if that’s the case, they should just look into it by themselves, why do we have to go do something so trivial?”

“Hmm, that makes sense.”

“Come to your senses. If Demons launched a large scale invasion then we’re bound to get lots of help requests from all over the place. We can’t physically answer them all. Try to measure the weight of the mission before you take them.”

Telling us to come then having us do the chores? Add didn’t like this situation at all. Rena’s overly soft-hearted decisions will become detrimental in more large decisions like this in the future.

Add felt more angry the more he talked so he shut his mouth. Rena was making a troubled look.

“....Just send Ara and me. We’re the fastest in the party. We’ll take care of this quickly so we can leave this place.”

They had already accepted this mission so there was no point in getting angry now. He just had to make sure to stop Rena next time. Add was about to round things up but Rena shook her head.

“No, everyone has to go together.”

“That’ll just slow things down.”

Was she going to say something overly soft-hearted again? Add’s voice was filled with displeasure but Rena spoke calmly.

“It’s because there’s something I didn’t mention to others. Let’s all go together.”

“What are you hiding?”

That guy Lento was acting strangely and Rena seemed to know why.

“Demons captured the Temple of Dedication and were threatening Feita until two days ago. Then....the whole situation changed when a single person appeared.”

Rena explained carefully.

“That person headed to the Temple of Dedication alone and Demons have stopped all activities ever since. Now do you understand?”

“Who was that person?”

Add asked an obvious question. Let’s try to organize this situation. One person headed to the Temple of Dedication in order to save the endangered Feita. Then that person went missing ever since?

“Mr.Lento didn’t tell me that much. But....this mission might be dangerous.”

Rena was making a grave expression that was rare for her. Someone headed alone towards the Demons’ base then the entire situation changed completely after that.

It was logically difficult to believe this story.

“What? Did that person go do negotiations or something?”

“Well. Mr.Lento didn’t seem to know anything more. He must have his own situation as well.”

Add nodded at the truth that Rena told him. The situation in Feita did seem strange now that he heard about this hidden circumstance.

“Could it be that....that person killed all the Demons by themselves? But if Demons had used the place as their base then there must have been at least hundreds of them.”

“Well....what you said could be true.”

When Rena answered without any confidence in her voice, Add let out a short laugh.

“There’s no way human capable of such thing exists. If such thing existed, it’d be a monster.”

“You never know because the world is a large place. And there’s nothing harmful in being careful right?”

“Alright, then let’s all go together even though it might take longer. Tell everyone to be well prepared.”

Someone went to the Demons' base alone and there was no news after..... It was a very interesting story. Add didn't know what methods that person used but it wasn't bad if he could learn how to fight Demons more effectively from this.

Since he didn't know when assassins that were after Eve could appear again.

"Yes. I got it."

".....Then why are you following me inside?"

Add finished his words and had entered the room but was taken aback. Rena stood on the doorsill and made a cute smile.

"Because I want to talk more with Add.... Will that be okay?"

"We should have finished everything there was to talk about."

Add spoke stiffly to the point where it could have made the listener feel offended. But Rena's smile didn't falter.

"Hmm, we still haven't finished our talk about Eve right?"

"...."

Yes, that talk wasn't over. But Add was sick of this topic now. Add reacted coldly and glared at Rena.

"You're meddling too much. I'll take care of that of my own so stop it."

"Hmm, okay. I'm sorry if you were offended."

Rena apologized without any signs of being hurt despite Add's cold answer. Add found it difficult to converse anymore and turned his head around to ignore her.

"I want to rest. Leave now."

"Alright, let's head out tomorrow at noon."

Rena smiled brightly and left after closing the door. Finally alone by himself, Add dropped on the bed and let out a sigh.

"She meddles too much...."

Add already knew since long ago that Rena went out of her way to look after even the minor details of the entire group. He also knew that Rena especially paid attention to Add who always tried to be an outsider.

Actually, this was the first time Add had refused her so openly like this.

It was true that his heart felt at ease whenever he spoke to Rena. That's why he was very fond of her. But....

"Kukukuk."

Add was in a position where he had to strive to steal Eve's Core in order to go back to the past. He had no reason to always match his pace with this overly soft-hearted party.

It should be better for him to at least draw the line for things regarding Eve.

"So Demons became silent....?"

Add murmured as he shut his eyes. He'll soon be able to find out what happened.

Temple of Dedication entrance.

After preparing for the worst, El Search Party entered the temple. Since they had heard this place had been captured by Demons, only thing they expected to encounter here were Demons. Everyone obviously didn't let their guard down.

"....There seems to be no presences?"

They couldn't see anything even though they moved inside pretty far. Ara murmured with a troubled voice and loosened the grip on her spear. Eve also looked around and agreed with Ara.

"There are no moving life signatures."

"What could have happened?"

"We'll find out if we go further."

When Elsword tried to round things up simply, Add joined in middle of their conversation.

"Moving together like this is waste of time. Let's all split up and look for anything that's wrong."

"Yes, shall we?"

"This is Demons' base it's dangerous."

Seeing Eve object, Add didn't reply back to her and instead stared at Rena. Rena had the final say anyways.

"Let's split up into two groups."

Eve nodded in agreement when Rena suggested a compromise. Then the problem was now how they were going to divide the groups.....But Rena decided that for herself.

“Elsword and Add go left. Me, Ara and Eve will go right.”

“What?”

Add asked back after hearing such an absurd order. He could get information from Eun if he was with Ara, and he could have various opportunities if moved with Eve.

But in the same team with Elsword? The least compatible person in the group? What could Rena possibly be thinking?

“I know Add only like girls but please move together with Elsword this time.”

“Who said I only like girls.....”

Add felt enraged but objecting in anger here would only look like he was trying to cover it up because what Rena said was true. Other members were already agreeing with Rena without objections.

“....Alright, I'll do that. Then how about communications?”

“We can use these.”

Add took the weird objects Eve held out towards him. Add tilted his head. The object was shaped like a cone but he couldn't tell their purpose.

“It's an Extreme Nasod Megaphone. We can hear each other from far away if we use this.”

“Hmm, Ah-Ah.....”

Add understood its functions and tried speaking lightly into the megaphones. It seemed to have an extremely far range seeing how his voice got spread far into the temple.

“This is incredible. How does this work?”

“Nasods are superior. This much is nothing.”

Eve unexpectedly gave a friendly reaction. Add was quite surprised by this fact and stared straightly at Eve. This made Eve turn her head around swiftly after a short pause.

“A, anyways there will be no problem if you use those. Tell us right away if you encounter any enemies. And Elsword?”

“What?”

“I'm telling you now. Don't do anything careless because I'm not near you. I won't let you off easily if you charge in recklessly at enemies.”

“There's no problem if I win.”

When Elsword replied bluntly, Eve's gears suddenly jumped at Elsword. Elsword instinctively swung his sword to hit Moby away and laughed refreshingly.

"Heheh! Something like this won't work anymore!"

Clank! Elsword was feeling confident after hitting away Reby that flew at him after Moby. But at that moment Eve dashed in as if she was gliding. Elsword's stance had gotten disturbed after fending off Moby and Reby. He didn't have any time to swing his sword again.

Still, Elsword somehow managed to block Moby who flew in towards him again. But....

Slap!

He couldn't stop Eve's palm. Elsword who just got slapped staggered as he dropped on the ground. Eve looked down at him coldly.

"How can you say that when you can't even block something like this? I'll tell you again. Don't do anything reckless. You'll be putting not only yourself but other people in danger as well."

"....Tch."

Elsword looked extremely dissatisfied but didn't talk back. Eve told Add stiffly.

"If Elsword does something reckless you can beat him down right away. I'll allow it."

Eve turned around and left without waiting for Add's answer. Ara hurriedly followed her and Rena made a bitter smile as she stared at Elsword and Add.

"Then contact us if you find something. Let's meet up in the Spire if we don't find anything,"

Rena also left as she waved her hand. There were only two of them left now. Add looked down at Elsword with dissatisfied eyes. Elsword was sitting down muttering to himself.

"That attack wasn't fair. You only attacked with gears before."

"How long are you going to stay down there and mutter?"

Add spoke then started walking towards the opposite direction. Elsword who was rubbing his cheek also got up and followed.

There's a person you hate even though they didn't do anything particularly wrong to you. For Add, Elsword was that kind of person.

Before Add time traveled, Elsword displeased him because he was an immature kid who ran about without knowing his place. Even now that he's grown and become somewhat more mature, Add couldn't bring himself to acknowledge him.

“There’s no one here. What’s going on?”

“It’s better that way.”

Add was using Dynamo’s scouting mode to scan the path in front of them beforehand. But for a temple that was supposedly captured by Demons, there weren’t any life signatures inside the Temple of Dedication.

There’s not even a rat in here. What’s going on?

“Could they have all gone back to the Demon realm because something urgent happened?”

“I don’t know. We might be able to find out something if we keep moving up.”

That was all the conversation that went back and forth between the two. Add took a glance at Elsword to his side and turned his head back around with a snort.

Add had never particularly hidden his distaste of Elsword so Rena should have known. Why did she divide up the team like this?

If they were to divide the teams, it was better for Elsword and Ara who were in charge of the front line to be in separate teams. Then considering commanding and decision making abilities, Add and Rena had to be in separate teams as well.

Thus the best team combination was dividing the teams into Ara and Add then Eve, Elsword and Rena. Didn’t they also divide up like this in their first fight in Ruben? Or she could have put Ara, Eve, Add in the same team just like back in Wally’s Castle.

Did Rena have some other purpose for pairing him up with Elsword?

“Big brother Add? What do you think about Eve?”

Elsword who was walking in front asked abruptly. Add stared at the boy’s back as he walked and explicitly made a frown.

Rena and this kid..... Why do they keep asking this question?

“Kukukuk, why are you asking me that all of a sudden?”

“Because Eve seems to be mindful of you.”

What does that mean? When Add didn’t answer, Elsword stopped and looked down.

“Ah, falling down from here will be bad.”

What appeared before them was a chasm. There were evenly spaced out stepping-stones creating a bridge so it didn’t look too hard to get across if you jumped on the stone bridges carefully.

Of course, Add didn't bother with the bridge and withdrew his Dynamos to get on top of them. There was no reason to jump when he could just fly.

Elsword jumped right away and stepped on the first stone. He could lose his life if he missed his steps but he didn't hesitate at all.

"Eve isn't, too, good, with, worldly affairs."

Elsword continued to talk as he jumped across the chasm. Add matched his speed with Elsword's and listened to what he said.

"She also isn't, too, good, with, talking to people. So she gets, confused, or if things doesn't go her way, she gets angry first. Just like before."

"What do you mean?"

"If I blocked, even her last attack, she would have gotten angrier and attacked me again."

Elsword's tone was as if he knew clearly how Eve would react. Even as how Add recalled it, Elsword's movements as he blocked Eve's attacks weren't too bad.

Almost to the extent that Elsword could have purposely let Eve's final slap hit.

"That's why she probably acts like that towards you too."

"....Why are you telling me this?"

Add somewhat figured out what Elsword was trying to say and asked back directly. He didn't like asking directly like this but Elsword was speaking so openly that he had no choice.

Elsword stopped his steps as he was jumping across and looked back.

"Because' Eve is my precious friend. I would like you to get along with her as well."

"....Something only a kid would think of."

Add didn't have to reply out loud but he couldn't help himself. Everybody be happy and get along~? Even kids these days wouldn't say such things.

"Really? I would like Eve to get along well with other people and not just me. She was always alone by herself until I met her."

"...."

Come to think of it, Add didn't know about Eve's past except for the fact that she was traveling with Elsword.

"But that's so lonely. I'm Eve's friend but I think it's better for her to have other friends too."

“.....You’re way too simple.”

Add replied dejectedly. Somebody else here was doing his utmost best to survive even by crossing time and here was Elsword thinking about such carefree things.

But surprisingly it didn’t make Add angry. Was it because it sounded so ridiculous?

“Well you might be right. But my wish for Eve to be able to get along with other people is real. She seems to have befriended Big sister Rena already.... But she doesn’t seem to be making progress with Big sister Ara.”

Elsword said this and calmly looked at Add.

“And she seems to have a strange atmosphere with you Big brother Add.”

“There’s nothing going on.”

“Really?”

Elsword didn’t say anymore and continued to jump across. As Add followed him, he realized something.

If he ambushed by firing a shockwave right now, Elsword would plummet down the chasm. Add was already at an advantage in a direct confrontation and now he even had the positional advantage. Elsword’s life was in his hands right now.

This is a great chance. Should I get rid of him right now? This guy would get in the way when I try to take Eve.

Add pondered as he looked at Elsword’s back. He could just say to the others that Elsword got ambushed by Demons.

Crash!

“Wha? Huh?”

But the part of the stone bridge Elsword was stepping on broke down. These kinds of bridges were designed to be crossed carefully without putting too much strength on the structure. It had broken down because Elsword moved across too forcefully.

Elsword waved his arms trying to regain his balance but his body was already falling backwards. The surface was extremely far down behind him. His life was in danger if he fell down like this.

“Ugh?!”

Elsword also realized this and desperately swung his arms but he still couldn't stop his body from falling backwards. Just when Elsword was about to fall,

Grab.

Add who flew in from the back grabbed his arm. Elsword stared at Add with a surprised expression then quickly regained his balance.

"Thank you Big brother Add."

"...."

Add was silent from the act he just performed. He would have died if I left him alone. Why did I ruin this chance by myself?

Add's gaze as he thought this remained on Elsword's other hand. He had already pulled out his sword sensing that he was about to fall. He must have instinctively realized recovering his balance was impossible and tried to stop himself from falling by driving the sword into the stone wall.

It was such wild animal like judgement. Honestly, if Add had been in the same situation he would have helplessly dropped to his death.

"Big brother Add? I'm okay now."

Add thought intently then finally let go of Elsword arm. He decided to leave aside his shock at Elsword's reaction speed and the mistake he just made for another time. It wouldn't be difficult for him to take Elsword's life if he put his mind to it anyways.

"I'm going up first."

"Ah, wait for me!"

Add ignored Elsword's shout from below and flew upwards.

They started to smell blood.

Demon corpses were all around them. Add and Elsword kept silent.

Rough body count as they came up was already numbering three digits. The smell was so intense that it could paralyze their noses..... There must be even more Demon corpses up ahead.

"This is too cruel...."

Add didn't say it out loud but he agreed with Elsword. Of course, Demons that were after Eve were hateful enemies that he had no intention of showing mercy to.

But even Add could only describe these Glitter soldier corpses as just brutal. It was difficult to spot a corpse that still had its entire body intact. Seeing how blood and flesh were splattered all over on the walls to their right and left, it almost looked like a scene right after the disaster where an overwhelming storm had swept by.

“.....It looks like this was all done by one person. This is not magic, it was done with a sword. All of them got blown away with one slash.”

A chill went down Add’s spine after hearing Elsword murmur with a dark expression on his face as he examined the Glitter soldiers’ corpses. Elsword was right.

Seeing how the corpses were all laid out on left and right sides of the road, it looked like someone had swung their sword left to right as they ran forwards.

Demons were one-sidedly massacred by this attack. Yes, this could only be described as massacre. Even Add shook his head at this terrible scene but Elsword for some reason knelt and seriously examined one corpse.

“Why are you looking at it so intently?”

“.....It’s just.”

Elsword shut his mouth and continued to examine the scar on the corpse. Add didn’t want to be in this place anymore so he moved ahead without informing Elsword.

He arrived at the Spire where they had agreed to meet.

Rena, Eve and Ara had already arrived before him. The three of them must have seen the corpses as they came up because their faces were all grim as well. Add was about to call out by shouting.....then realized three of their gazes were focused on one point. Add turned his head towards the direction of their gaze.

“.....”

Cutty Sark was hanging on the wall pierced by harpoons. Not just one but dozens of harpoons pierced its body. It was pointless to check if it was alive or dead.

It was as if someone was playing with a toy, displaying Cutty Sark on the wall as if it was an insect specimen.

“This is too harsh....”

When Add spoke out, the silence in the area was broken. Ara nodded.

“Even if they were Demons, there shouldn’t be a need to go this far.”

“As I’ve observed on our way up, they were all finished with a single strike. Not only that, this was all done by the skill of a single individual. What’s going on Rena?”

“Hmm....”

At Eve’s gaze, Rena scratched her cheek with a troubled expression. It was difficult to hide it from them anymore.

“We actually came here to check because something like this might have happened....”

“Is this person an ally or foe?”

Eve’s question was actually ridiculous. Someone appeared out of the blue and defeated all the Demons threatening Feita for them. There’s no way this person was an enemy.

And yet, no one in the El Search Party could say Eve’s question was wrong. This wasn’t a fight; it was a once-sided slaughter, a massacre. This person was strong but extremely brutal.

Even by looking at the harpoons piercing Cutty Sark’s body so densely....you could almost sense the madness.

“I don’t know which.....But let’s be careful.”

Add didn’t like Rena acting so unconfidently so he asked abruptly.

“Tell us already if you know something about this. I don’t think there are many individuals who can pull this kind of thing off.”

Add didn’t know any famous individuals from this age because he was from the past. But there shouldn’t be many people who possessed this much overwhelming power, cruelty and madness.

“Mr.Lento was also very reluctant and didn’t tell me. It almost seemed like he got his lips sealed....”

Rena had a troubled expression as she trailed her words.

“But he did say Knight.”

“.....Knight?”

At that word, the entire group’s gaze turned towards Elsword who had just arrived. Wasn’t this boy also a Knight of the Velder Kingdom?

But Elsword shook his head with a grim expression.

“I don’t know either. This kind of person....”

“I don’t know who it is. But doesn’t defeating the Demons in order to protect Feita mean this is a good person?”

Ara looked like she couldn't believe her own words because there was no confidence in her voice.

"There was no need to go this far. They even slaughtered enemies who were turning their back and running away."

"B, but they could have done more bad things if they were left to run away....."

"Even then, I wouldn't like to meet this person."

Add was organizing his thoughts as he listened to Ara and Eve talk. Then his eyes suddenly gleamed.

"Wait, there's something above. It's a life signature."

Dynamo he had let fly for scouting had found a life signature.

".....Is it the person who caused this?"

"We'll have to see directly. Judging by how weak the life signature is, whoever it is must not be in a good state."

"That's not good. We should go help right away!"

Ara was about to quickly run to the top but Rena grabbed her arm and stopped her.

"Wait Ara. Let's all move forward carefully while examining our surroundings"

"But Mr.Add just said the person is in dangerous state. We have to hurry."

"There's no guarantee that it's a human. It could be a surviving Demon."

Add spoke bluntly and turned around.

"There's no harm in being careful. This way."

As Add walked in front, he took a slight glance at Elsword.

Was it because he heard that a Knight could have caused this atrocity? Elsword's face looked grimmer than ever before.

'.....Well it's not like I care.'

Add made a snort then moved up the stairs.

Altar of Dedication.

A giant, wolf faced Demon was sprawled on the ground. El Search Party with Add in the front carefully approached it then they all stopped moving as terror filled their faces.

Parts of the Demon's body were torn off and its abdomen was pierced by a sharp pillar. What's surprising was that it still was clinging to its life.

"Berthe...."

Add unconsciously called out the Demon's name as he approached it. Even if it was a Demon general, it posed no threat now that it had lost most of its body.

Berthe who was panting heavily slightly turned its head around at the call. There was aura of death on its face and it didn't look like it will hold out for much longer.

"Huff, Huff.....W, Who are you?"

"You don't need to know who I am, who did this?"

Berthe closed its mouth and looked like it was guessing at Add's identity. Looking at its condition, Berthe won't hold out for long. But you could tell it was truly a Demon general judging by how it still tried to run its brain despite being at its deathbed.

"Kugh, Ugh, huff..."

But even Berthe immediately let out a painful groan when Add kicked its sides. It must have been deathly painful since he got kicked while his abdomen was pieced by a stone pillar.

"Mr.Add!"

Ara called out in horror from behind but Add ignored it. There wasn't much time left to get information out of Berthe.

"I'll send you off peacefully if you answer properly, I don't think that's a bad deal for you."

"Kugh, H, human trash...."

Berthe attempted to howl but its body didn't move according to its will.

Add thought about kicking again but gave up on it. You could visibly tell Berthe's condition worsening rapidly.

But Berthe who was facing death showed its teeth as it laughed.

"Kuhaha. You guys will also....soon find out. There's no need to hurry."

"What a deaf beast you are. Anyone could have finished you off. Stop acting so mighty."

Add purposely enticed Berthe's anger. It must have been effective because rage filled Berthe's blurry eyes.

"Why you..... Do you think I would have ended up like this if that thing wasn't my opponent?"

“Yes, so what is that thing? I don’t know how great it was but would it really brag about defeating you?”

At Add’s mockery, Berthe put strength in its eyes and spoke every single word with a force.

“Your confidence will be short lived. All of you will end up like me if that thing appears again. That D’s Kn....”

Berthe’s voice as he spoke forcefully seemed to dim all of a sudden then became quiet. Its life ran out as it held out its tongue.

It was barely alive in the first place. Going out of its way to speak quickened its death. It was a miserable death unfit for a Demon General.

“....”

While Add was staring down at Berthe’s corpse, Eve suggested coldly from behind him.

“Demons have been wiped out. What should we do now?”

“....Let’s get out of here first. We have to report this to Feita.”

Everyone turned around following Rena’s grim voice. Add who was quietly looking down at Berthe’s corpse also turned around and followed when the others’ footsteps got further.

Add thought deeply as he walked then found something on the ground.

“What is this?”

It was different from the color of the ground so Add picked it up with his fingertips..... It was a strand of red hair. It’s Elsword’s. Even though Add thought this, he somehow didn’t feel like throwing it away.

Since it was a very beautiful strand of crimson red hair.

It was already dark when the El Search Party exited Temple of Dedication. They would have normally prepared to camp out right away. But this time it took a while for them to prepare because they had to choose a campsite far away from the Temple of Dedication.

I want to be far away from that Temple of Dedication filled with mountains of Demon corpses. This was the unified thought of all of the El Search Party members.

After finishing a simple meal, El Search Party fell asleep around the campfire. Ara beside Add fell asleep quickly and was making quiet breathing noises. But Add couldn’t fall asleep so easily.

D.

The word Berthe left them really hung on his mind. The one who ordered Dark Count Ran was D. So Add had thought D was Demons' commander, the one behind the assassins that came after Eve.

But why would someone related to D annihilate Feita's entire Demon battalion? What's the point of damaging their own forces at this point when they were launching a full scale invasion of the Elrios continent?

He couldn't find out in detail because Berthe died before finishing its words. But Add could tell with certainty that whoever turned the Temple of Dedication into a bloodbath was terrifyingly powerful.

The knight that Lento mentioned must have gotten caught up by this atrocity and lost their life. They couldn't find the knight's corpse but it's probably rotting in there somewhere.

Anyways, Add had no idea what to do if this person were to come after Eve. The Shadow Master he struggled so much against looked like a child's play compared to this.

“....phew.”

“Are you sleeping?”

Add paused at the question coming abruptly from his back. Eve who was on watchout duty spoke to him all of a sudden.

“Ku.....”

“No, I can't sleep.”

Add was about to get up as he laughed but paused. Because another voice, Elsword answered Eve's call instead.

“Eating and sleeping a lot is your only good point so hurry up and sleep.”

“I'm not always like that.”

Add had mistaken completely. His face turned red. He was glad he was late in getting up.

“We have to move tomorrow too. Hurry up and sleep.”

“You should too.”

“Nasods don't need to sleep. I wouldn't mind keeping watch all the time.”

Eve replied with a somewhat proud tone. Actually, Eve had suggested doing this many times during their journey but Rena had refused. That's why they took turns watching out instead.

“Because that’s not what traveling together is about.”

Add listened to the conversation behind him and bit his lips unknowingly.

It was a surprisingly smooth and warm conversation. Eve’s voice also sounded looser than usual.

“I heard you say that so many times now.”

“Didn’t I tell you that traveling together means sharing the responsibilities as well?”

“You told me that your older sister told you that”

Add’s heart felt painful for some reason and closed his eyes tightly. It would be better if he could fall sleep right now somehow.....But he couldn’t fall asleep.

He was almost jealous of Ara who was sleeping soundly beside him.

“You seem to be at least obedient to what your older sister says....”

“Well, Big sister never said anything that was wrong.”

You could feel a strange sense of nostalgia in Elsword’s voice.

“Let’s go back to what we were talking about. You don’t look too well. Do you have something you’re worried about? Of course, after seeing such a scene I do understand....”

Eve had a tired tone as well. A one-sided massacre. Even if they were demons, seeing hundreds of corpses piled up like that would prevent anyone from falling asleep.

“I was just thinking of various things.”

“Add, are you sleeping?”

Add realized a bit later that Eve had called him. Could it be that she knew he was listening?

Unlike Add’s heart that was beating loudly, Eve’s voice that the night wind carried towards him was serene.

“I’m sorry this late at night. But if you’re awake, let’s talk for a moment.”

“.....Kukuk.”

Add slowly brought his upper body up and took a slight glance behind him. Eve and Elsword who sat in front of the campfire were staring at him.

“Others are asleep so come closer. Let’s talk quietly.”

“If you’d like.”

Dynamo had a mute mode but there shouldn't be a need to use that here. Add approached the two of them as he let out a slight laugh. Two of them didn't seem to think that Add was listening in on their conversation before.

"So what do you want to talk about this late at night?"

"I'm asking you because I want to confirm something. What's D?"

Eve must have been worried about Berthe's last words as well. Elsword was also waiting for Add's mouth to move with curiosity.

Add was about to back out by saying he didn't know but changed his mind.

Add didn't know too much in detail either. Maybe talking to them could lead to some clues.

"It's someone who's related to Demons. You could interpret the scene from today as Feita's Demon battalion not doing something to D's liking and paying the price."

"It was a frightening display of skill."

"They were all killed by a sword."

Add let out a snort.

"Whatever it was, it cleaned up the Demons for us. That's something good. Why are you guys so worried?"

"It's because of words that the dying Demon left. That whatever did that to it will appear in front of us soon."

"....It's something it blurted out as it died. Don't worry about it."

Add erased his smile when he saw that Eve was looking worried. D had come after Eve before and there was a good chance that D was still after Eve. But revealing this to Eve would only give her unnecessary worries.

"We just have to defeat anyone who stands in our way. It's a very simple logic. Don't Nasods understand this?"

"....It's not like I don't know."

Eve made an extremely unpleasant face when Add mocked her by bringing up Nasods. Add was overjoyed that he got a reaction from her.

"Then you must have forgotten. So you woke someone from their sleep just so you could cry about how worried you were? What an emotional Nasod."

“You are incorrect. I don’t have such thing as emotions. I thought you were someone whom I could discuss this with but it seems I was mistaken.”

“That’s right. I only just figured out that Nasods could make a mistake too. This is incredible! Being so distraught with worry about what a single small fry Demon said, I must have made a mistake about you too. Kukukuk.”

“.....”

When Add continued to taunt her, Eve really looked offended now. Add who was getting into this mood was about to say more lines but Elsword made a sigh at that moment.

“Big brother Add. If you wanted to comfort Eve you should have just said it properly. You’re not a kid you know.....why do you have to say it like that?”

“.....What do you mean?”

Elsword looked at Add with a very pitiful gaze.... It looked like he was feeling really displeased.

“I don’t get why you have to say what you want to say in such a way.”

“A kid is saying something weird after staying up for too long.”

Add became really displeased and taunted back. But Elsword didn’t mind at all.

“Eve, why did you go out of your way to wake Big brother Add up to talk about this? Do you have a reason?”

“It’s because this person knows something but is hiding it.”

Add’s heart sank at those sudden words. Eve’s golden eyes were staring straightly at him.

.....How did she notice?

“You knew about what Rena kept secret from us. Am I right?”

Add felt relieved at her continuing words. What Eve was pointing out was that Rena had told Add about the secret circumstances behind this scouting mission.

After getting his composure back, Add crossed his arms and snorted.

“She just told me on her own. And I didn’t tell you guys because I didn’t feel the need to.”

“It would have been dangerous if we ran into whatever that caused this. You should have told us beforehand.”

“What? So you wanted to stay out if it was something dangerous?”

Eve stared coldly when Add taunted her again. Elsword sighed and butted in when the two started arguing again.

“Eve, you don’t have to worry about me. It’s not like this is the first time I’ve seen corpses. I also saw many things while doing Knight’s duties.”

“....I’m not doing this particularly because I’m worried about you.”

Elsword spoke calmly as Eve turned her head around abruptly.

“Actually I almost fell down the chasm today. But I was saved thanks to Big brother Add’s help. So don’t pick on him too much.”

“....”

At those words, Eve who had turned her head around carefully turned her eyes to look at Add.

Add pretended he didn’t care as he looked up at the night sky as the atmosphere turned strange all of a sudden during their argument.

Stars were bright.

“My words were too harsh, Add.”

“My, are you fishing for compliments....?”

Add mocked again but Eve’s attitude was completely different from before.

“Thank you for saving Elsword.”

“....”

Add forgot what he was about to say when Eve even bowed slightly. He never thought even in his dreams that there will come a day when that pompous Eve would thank him like this.

But how come the reason had to be.....

His heart felt stifled.

“I’m going back to sleep now.”

Add stood up and went back to his sleeping spot. He didn’t like how Eve’s attitude changed after hearing a single word that he had helped Elsword.

Wasn’t this completely discriminatory?

Well, in Eve's point of view, she had been always together with Elsword and it hasn't even been that long since she met Add. It was obvious how she'd treat the two differently.....but Add didn't like this at all.

Add lay on his side and was about to close his eyes to sleep but paused. Ara had her eyes wide open with both of her hands covering her mouth.

“.....”

“.....”

Their gazes met. Ara must have awoken from her sleep and had been listening in on their conversation. Add's eyes instinctively turned fowl.

“I, I didn't hear anything, Mr.Add.”

“What didn't you hear?”

“I didn't hear anything about how Mr.Add and Ms.Eve were arguing.”

So she's confessing that she heard everything. Add glared at her more sharply. Ara looked very intimidated by this and shrunk. But flustered Ara suddenly opened her eyes widely as she got up from her spot while grabbing her spear.

“Someone's coming.”

“Who is....?”

He had thought she was making an excuse but Rena across the campfire was also getting up. It must be true.

“There's only one but please be careful.”

“....”

They had moved away but this place still wasn't too far away from the Temple of Dedication. It wouldn't be strange to say that the one that had created the atrocity in the Temple could be looking for their next victim.

Human form that could be seen far away must have noticed their campfire because it was approaching this way.

It's getting closer. Add looked at Rena but she didn't show any signs of aiming her bow. Is she going to let it get close?

“Everyone, it's someone we already know.”

Rena said this and put down her bow. Even if it's someone we knew, wouldn't it be better for us to be cautious if it was coming towards us so abruptly? Add couldn't understand but Rena instructed the other members to drop their weapons.

"Add too, quickly."

"...."

Add who held out in battle position the longest also moved the Dynamos behind his back. Of course he didn't intend to disarm completely so he prepared himself to change into attack position right away.

Human's footsteps got closer.

"Haah, haah...."

The sound of panting could be heard as the footsteps approached. It seemed whoever that was approaching was extremely fatigued. Rena approached the form that was approaching them.

"You look tired, are you okay?"

"....Ah."

The person that came running to them with all they had dropped in front of Rena. She panted heavily after Rena quickly caught her from falling.

"P, please help. Velder is...."

A face they saw in Elder, it was Ariel.

Velder Kingdom's capital, Velder.

But that Velder has been invaded by Demons coming through the Dimension Gate.

There were obviously knights and soldiers protecting the city but the Demon forces that appeared abruptly from the inner city were too fierce. And Velder's army also had to prioritize the safety of the civilians so they couldn't help but to retreat.

Temporary commander of the Velder Liberation Army, Vanessa had hastily scraped together some forces and now she was pacing about near the barracks.

"Phew...."

She was regarded as an outstanding commander but even she couldn't think of how to overcome this situation. Allied forces were scattered while enemy forces were gathered together. Also, many

civilians had been taken hostage. Civilians were direct relatives of the soldiers so.....Morale of the soldiers had hit rock bottom.

Actually, retreating right now and reorganizing their forces was the better choice. But the problem was that the royal castle had been captured.

“We need reinforcements.”

Vanessa had already come up with a plan to overcome this situation with best of her abilities. But they didn’t have enough forces to execute that plan. Even the soldiers she had currently had been scraped together somehow. Their current forces were barely being held together because of Vanessa’s leadership.

She had sent messengers everywhere notifying that the capital was in danger and requested for reinforcements but there were no replies. It seemed the others places had their hands full as well. The news that came from other places was all chaotic these days.

Only if they still had the Kingdom’s strongest, Red Knights.....

“Phew....”

She couldn’t think of any solutions no matter how much she thought. When Vanessa was letting out a long sigh, a pleasant voice came from behind her.

“You might get wrinkles if you sigh too much like that.”

“....”

Vanessa frowned and looked back after hearing this daring speech. She had assumed some insolent solider had made a joke....But the owner of the voice was a girl.

A beautiful women she had never seen before was smiling at her. The girl’s beauty felt so out of this world that she felt unfit for this battlefield that was concentrated with forces that conducted war.

Vanessa thought for a moment if she was seeing things.....

But seeing how the soldiers around them were looking with their jaws wide open, this was real.

“W, who are you?”

“Hmm, we came after getting your call for reinforcements. Is this the command center of the Velder Liberation Army?”

Vanessa came to her sense and returned to the business like attitude as she nodded.

“I’m the commander Vanessa. May I ask you for your name?”

“I’m Rena. We came after receiving your call from Feita.”

“Ah, so you’re the El Search Party that defeated the demons in that....Elder?”

Vanessa stared surprisingly at Rena for a different reason this time.

Actually, the El Search Party wasn’t a well known group before. (Leaving aside how unknown its members were, it hasn’t even been that long since they were formed so this was rather obvious). But they were famous now because at the start of Demon invasion of the Elrios continent, they had defeated the Demons that appeared in Elder which marked the start of the invasions to come.

Every place was in dire straits now due to the Demon invasion but only Elder was safe. It was obvious for Vanessa’s expression to brighten after hearing this group’s name.

“Thank you so much for coming to assist us in Velder. I actually hadn’t expected you to come here.....”

Vanessa was overjoyed and held out her hand. When Rena took and shook her hand, Vanessa explained herself.

“Ah, that’s because I heard that you went to Feita. I thought that it would be difficult for you to come here since you’d be busy facing the Demons in Feita.”

“Hmm, we did go to Feita.....”

“What happened on their side? Could it be that you came here after taking care of them already?”

Vanessa was now looking at Rena with eyes of admiration.

After defeating the Demons in Elder, then defeating the Demons in Feita, they didn’t take any time to rest and came to Velder? Weren’t these people truly heroes, saviors of this continent?”

When Vanessa asked with almost tears in her eyes, Rena made a troubled expression and shook her head.

“Umm, that’s not true. Feita’s Demons had been already been defeated before we arrived. That’s why we could come to Velder so quickly when we heard the news.”

“Feita defeated the Demons by themselves? But defenses there should be even more insufficient than in here. Of course, Sir Lento is an outstanding commander but....”

Vanessa couldn’t understand and trailed her words. She thought that Rena might be trying to be extremely modest.

“An unknown something had defeated them before us. Hmm, so how’s the situation here right now?”

“Ah, I heard that there are other members also in the El Search Party. Wouldn’t it be better if you all listened together? Could it be....that you came alone?”

Vanessa asked carefully in order to hide signs of disappointment much as possible. Of course, El Search Party had achieved amazing feats and Rena was sure to be a greatly skilled individual as well. But would the situation change too much with only her added to their forces?

“No, that’s....we did all come together but.”

Insolent voices came from behind Rena as she trailed her words.

“What’s wrong with eating some potatoes?”

“Could it be that we weren’t supposed to eat those potatoes Ms.Eve?I kind of ate a lot.”

“Listening to what’s happening here come first. We didn’t hurry here without any reason after all.”

Just as Vanessa’s eyes turned round at such unfamiliar conversation, someone approached and stood beside Rena. The boy with one eye covered with an eye patch, Add sighed and requested Rena.

“I’ll do the talking so go say something to those kids. They’re whining about how hungry they are and there’s no answer to them.”

“Ah, we did skip meals because we came in such a hurry....”

Rena understood and went to calm down Elsword and Eve. Add spoke to Vanessa instead.

“Are you the commander here?”

“That’s correct.....”

His attitude wasn’t too polite but Vanessa modestly nodded in response. Then Add held out his hand.

“Map of the capital, hurry up and give me the one that has the layout of the current troop placements.”

El Search Party left to help Velder without hesitation soon as they heard from Ariel that it had been captured by Demons.

El Search Party arrived in Velder quickly and requested for briefing from Vanessa about the current situation.

“....That’s everything.”

“This looks hopeless.”

Inside the commander’s tent, Add heard Vanessa’s explanation and let out a large sigh. Elsword who was chewing on steamed potato also nodded.

“Isn’t it too reckless to try rescuing the civilians and retake the royal castle at the same time with such small forces? I think we should back off for now.”

“....As knights, we cannot run away and leave our lord behind.”

Vanessa reproached Elsword for being young and making light of chivalry. But Add let out a short laugh.

“Knights or not, they are of no use if they are dead. Forces here will be annihilated too if the Demons enclose their forces around us. You should know this already.”

“....”

Vanessa was also feeling the sense of danger so she couldn’t say that Add was wrong. Demons not attacking aggressively after they had captured the royal castle was one of the big reasons that Vanessa could somehow muster this much forces in the first place.

“Hmm, it’s not impossible.”

But Rena who was looking at the map pointed out two places.

“We can use divisionary tactics. One side will rescue the civilians while the other side charges into the royal castle.”

“Splitting up forces when we are already in inferior situation would just lead to us getting picked off one at a time.”

Rena smiled gently at Add’s indication.

“That’s why we’re here. We can draw the Demons’ attention to us.”

“....So it’s a double divisionary tactic.”

Vanessa also realized what Rena was trying to say. Division after division, when the El Search Party that was superior fighting unit gathered the attention of the Demons, Vanessa and the soldiers will use that chance to each achieve their goals.

“It’s not impossible.”

“I’ll do it too!”

Eve and Ara also agreed with Rena’s decision. Add clicked his tongue at this absurdity.

“Bare bone of that plan is us getting completely exposed to the Demons’ swords and spears. We’ll be the ones in most danger.”

“Isn’t that why we came here Add?”

Add shook his head at Rena's words. Even so, he didn't want to agree to this stupid plan. If Add was in danger, he could just escape. But....

"Why are you looking at me?"

Eve wouldn't escape. Add knew this already from his experiences in other timelines. No matter how powerful of an enemy appeared, Eve will face them with all she had long as she had someone she must protect.

".....I can't agree to this plan. At least not as how it is right now."

"Hmm."

Rena looked troubled as she trailed her words but Add had no intention of conceding this time. Actually, if two of them were by themselves, Add would have stopped Rena no matter what even if he had to get angry at her. He was toning it down right now because the others were here.

"This is basically running into our very likely deaths. I can't bet everything on 50% chance of victory."

"But we don't know how the Demons' movements might change if we stall for too long. We have to act right now."

".....What about the fighting forces other than us?"

Add also knew that this plan had the highest chance of success in their current situation. It was just problematic for him because the El Search Party will be exposed to the blunt of the danger.

The fact that Demons were after Eve was almost certain. He didn't want to put Eve in such a dangerous situation.

"We requested various places but you people are the only ones that came."

"Why are this country's defenses so loose? Didn't you have those Knights or something? How are you guys losing so helplessly like this?"

Even if Demons had invaded in full force, shouldn't the capital's defenses at least be better? Vanessa weakly shook her head at Add's obvious indication.

"We had an order of Knights.....but because they got disbanded, we had to reorganize entire military. The troops weren't fully organized yet when we got attacked."

"Disband? What do you mean?"

"We had the strongest order of Knights in the kingdom called the Red Knights....."

Just when Vanessa trailed her words, Eve cut her off for some reason.

“It’s fine, you don’t need to explain about that. Let’s come up with a detailed plan.”

“Why did you cut her off there? We should know about what’s going on.”

This wasn’t Add provoking Eve, he was serious. Add lacked knowledge about this age and although he didn’t care much about this topic before, but he needed to know now.

“I’ll tell you separately if you are curious.”

“....What?”

Add frowned at Eve’s response. He couldn’t understand Eve’s actions right now. It was as if she wanted to avoid this topic.

Vanessa explained instead.

“It’s a well known story.....The Red Knights that were composed of the most skilled individuals in this kingdom were wiped out half a year ago.”

“Wiped out? So there weren’t any survivors? Who did it?”

Powerful Knights were annihilated not too long before the Demons invaded? It seemed there was some correlation to these two events. Just when Vanessa was about to explain Add’s question, Elsword suddenly stood up from his seat.

“I’ll be waiting outside.”

“We’re still in middle of the meeting. Where do you think you’re going?”

Elsword exited the tent ignoring Add’s words. When Add frowned at Elsword’s confusing reaction, Eve also stood up.

Add grabbed Eve’s hand as she was about to follow Elsword out.

“Why are you leaving too? What’s going on here?”

“I’ll tell you later.”

“Tell me right now. In a way I can understand.”

When Add spoke as he stood up too, Eve stared at Vanessa then the other members once. Eve opened her mouth after a moment of hesitation.

“I don’t think I should be the one telling you thisBut I’ll tell you because I think you all should know. The Red Knights from the story just now, the name of their leader is Elesis.”

Eve revealed carefully.

“She’s Elsword’s older sister.”

“....”

“Let go of me now that you know.”

But Add didn’t let go despite Eve’s request. The truth that was revealed to them just now was surprising, but letting Eve follow Elsword didn’t sit right with Add.

“Don’t go and remain seated here. There’s no use going after him.”

“That’s not something for you to decide.”

“I’m telling you to not get in my way.”

Add forcefully pressed Eve’s shoulder and made her sit. Eve tried to resist with an extremely displeased expression but paused at the continuation of Add’s words.

“I’ll go talk with him. So you all just take a break for now. I’ll bring him back.”

“....What are you thinking?”

When Eve stared suspiciously, Add laughed slightly.

What am I thinking? You following him will make my eyes sore that’s what.

“Girls don’t need to know.”

“I’m a Nasod.”

“There there. There are also things guys want to talk about by themselves. So let’s let Add go instead okay?”

When Rena agreed, Eve stared at Add very suspiciously then turned her gaze around.

“It’s a delicate subject for Elsword so don’t speak carelessly. I won’t forgive you if you do.”

“....Kukuk, whatever.”

Add left the tent after passing over Eve’s warning with a cold smile.

Finding Elsword wasn’t difficult. It was rare to see a boy sitting on top a box looking up blankly at the sky, especially amidst the barracks where everyone else was moving busily.

Add found Elsword and was about to approach him but paused. Just what should he say?

“....”

He didn't take up this task particularly because he was sorry about bringing up the topic or that he wanted to comfort Elsword. He just didn't want to see Eve do this task.

Comforting someone that was dejected, and to comfort someone that he didn't like to top it off. Wasn't this too high level of a task?

“Tch....”

So is this what you call falling into one's own trap? Add clicked his tongue in distaste as he approached Elsword.

All he had to do in cases like this was just say something that wasn't in his mind. It didn't suit his tastes but it's not like he couldn't do it if he made up his mind.

Anyways, he just didn't want Eve to do this. So he'll do it instead.

“Hey.”

Elsword didn't answer even though Add approached while calling him. He must have been really disheartened. Just when Add was about to make up some smooth talk, Elsword spoke abruptly.

“Big sister isn't dead.”

“What?”

Didn't they say Red Knights were wiped out? Then even their leader shouldn't have gotten out safely.

Was it just baseless optimism of the deceased's family? Just when Add was thinking about how to reply, Elsword denied Add's thought.

“Because only Big sister's corpse wasn't found at that spot where multitudes of arrows fell down.”

So it wasn't just a baseless opinion. Anyways if Elesis was alive, shouldn't there be no reason for Elsword to feel this dejected right now? Add wanted to ask this but stayed quiet for now.

Rather than comforting him half-heartedly, Add thought it would be better to listen quietly for now.

“Big sister didn't show up ever since. Even when rumors about how Big sister ran away after killing her subordinates started going around.”

“.....So only the leader's subordinates were killed and the leader disappeared.”

The group where the best in the nation were gathered, to become the leader of such group, Elesis must have been extremely powerful. If she didn't die in that incident, you had to say she was staying hidden by her own will.

It was obvious she'd get suspected.

“Yes. I became a knight in order to fight beside my sister one day....But Big sister stopped being a knight when I finally became a knight myself. Now no one calls Big sister the knight of knights or the strongest leader of the Red Knights anymore. Rather....they mock her. Calling her traitor that sold out her comrades to the enemies.”

“She’s probably not coming out because she’s treating her wounds.”

“Yes, I want to believe that too.”

Elsword’s attitude was very modest but there were signs that he had worried a lot about this matter in his voice.

Even Add who disliked Elsword could tell how large Elsword’s heart towards Elesis was and just how precious Elesis was to Elsword.

“If I continue to fight as a knight, then Big sister will return as a knight after healing her wounds right?”

Elsword stretched his hand out towards the sky. Obviously, his hands didn’t reach no matter how far he stretched.

“Of course.....I know that all of this is just my wishful thinking.”

Add spoke abruptly in response to Elsword’s self-deprecating murmur.

“Do what you’d like. What are you worried about?”

“Big brother Add?”

“I said just do what you would like to do. Having that kind of hope, or giving up, that’s all up to your heart.”

Add’s voice was blunt but he wasn’t trying to provoke Elsword here.

“The heart of wanting to get back the person important to you is something that’s obvious. Don’t deprecate that feeling by saying it’s just your wishful thinking or anything else of the sort. At least don’t say that in front of me. It’s despicable.”

“....”

Add’s ultimate goal was to go back to the far past and get back his precious person that was stolen from him.

Add had sworn long ago that he’ll do anything in order to achieve this goal.

“What’s so wrong about wanting to get back what you lost? I at least don’t think that it’s something pathetic. No, isn’t it something that’s blatantly obvious to desire? If your sister is so precious to you,

then all you have to do is continue with your beliefs. This is the correct way no matter what anyone says from around you. I'll guarantee you that."

".....Big brother Add."

Add shut his mouth to stop his speech when Elsword called him quietly. Because of his momentary spur of anger, Add had just spat out his inner feelings that he had kept hidden.

Anyways, let's finish this up somehow.

"So, anyways do what you'd like. Either keep working hard in order to meet Elesis again or give up hope after listening to those people thoughtlessly babbling about her. You're free to choose what you want."

"....."

"But if you still possess the wish to fight together with your sister as a knight, then you should remain a knight until she comes back. That's all.... I wanted to say."

He just did something totally unfitting for him. Add didn't wait for Elsword's answer and turned around. He didn't want to talk while facing Elsword anymore.

"Big brother Add."

Voice followed him from behind.

"Thank you for cheering me on."

"Hmph....."

It was true that he didn't like Elsword. But despite this, he also didn't like how Elsword was acting just now. No, even if it wasn't Elsword, no matter who it was.....When discussing about the passion to meet with one's important person again, Add must respond sincerely.

Because that's the reason why Add is striving towards his goal. Even going far as to ridiculing time.

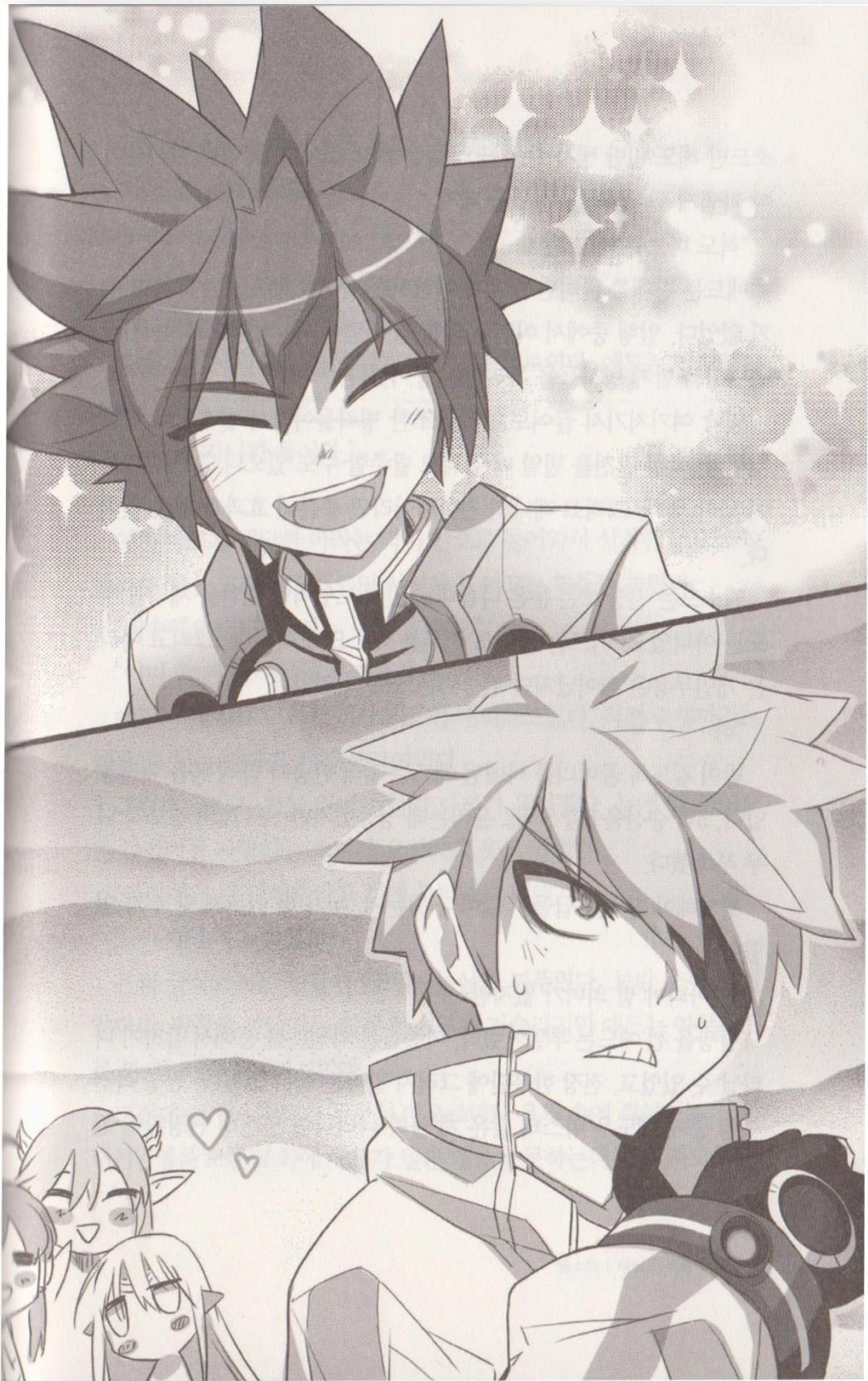
I want to meet my precious person whom I'll never meet again, I want to get back my time with that person. It was a dream Add wanted to achieve even if he had to throw away his very self.

Add walked with his hands in pockets then suddenly paused. He didn't know since when, but three girls were staring at him with an amazed gaze.

"Mr.A,Add..... I was so moved."

Ara was wiping her tears with back of her hand as she stared at Add,

"Hmm, Just as I thought, Add is a good kid. Big sis was very moved as well."



Rena was smiling brightly. She seemed like she didn't know what to do because she was so proud of Add.

".....That was magnificent."

Eve was complimenting him as if she didn't want to admit it. Add's face turned bright red after he realized that the three of them had been listening.

"W, What?! Since when were you guys listening?!"

"We listened to everything from the start!"

"I didn't want to listen but Rena kept...."

"We were watching ever since when you tried to approach Elsword but hesitated. Honestly.....for Add to show such a splendid behavior. Add is very dependable as always."

Leaving aside Ara who was sobbing, Rena also responded as if she was really moved.

Add whose face had turned bright red hastily put on his hood to hide his face.

"You did a good job Add~"

"S, shut up. I'm going to rest for a bit. Just go and think of some plans while I'm gone."

Add escaped the scene as he muttered. He couldn't withstand these stares from the girls.

I'm going to kick in my sleep for a while whenever I recall this.

It became night and worrying about the plan ended up becoming Add's task.

"Ah, seriously...."

Add groaned as he looked down at the enemy and ally troop placement map. In this situation where enemies had the advantage in numbers, in order to rescue both the hostages and the royal castle..... the El Search Party had to step out into the front lines.

Each of the El Search Party members had power equivalent to hundreds of warriors. Even Elsword, the weakest amongst their group could handle the worth of dozens of soldiers. He'll probably roast away Glitter soldiers easily.

"But enemies aren't idiots either...."

Add thought of various scenarios while rolling his pen but couldn't think of any particular solution. Only person in the group that he could discuss this type of matter with was Rena. But she was currently helping with encouraging the soldiers with Vanessa.

The soldiers lacked solidarity because they had been gathered so hastily. They could get frightened and run away when the battle actually starts so there was a need to encourage them beforehand. Also, Rena's sociability will be plenty effective for this job.

Elsword looked like he had some eyes for examining the battlefield but it wasn't to the point where he could suggest something, Eve wasn't a battle type Nasod in the first place and while Ara was a powerful martial artist, she didn't have any knowledge about military tactics.

"Haah....."

Add thought desperately into the night but put down his pen with a deep sigh in the end. He was successful in turning the 50% chance of victory into 60%.....but information about their enemy was way too insufficient.

He didn't know how many officer types were there to watch out for and if there was anything else.

"Although it's pointless to know...."

Add crossed his arms and muttered. Demons could appear through the Dimension Gate abruptly and there was no guarantee that they wouldn't do that in middle of this battle. Chaos will ensue if something like a Shadow Master appeared in the middle of execution of their plan.

Then a frail voice came from outside the tent.

"Mr.Add? Are you asleep?"

It was Ara. Add replied sharply.

"I'm sleeping."

"Ah, I see. Then see you tomorrow."

The shadow outside the tent bowed. Add felt dumbfounded as he fixed his words.

"I'm not asleep yet. Come in."

"Yes."

Ara answered politely then came into the tent and looked around in amazement. Then she became surprised after sensing Add's gaze.

"I'm sorry. You must have been working on a plan."

"You already intruded. Don't apologize now."

Add spoke sharply then looked down at the battlefield map again. He planned to try much as he could until he ran out of time.

Then suddenly bare white legs were placed on top of the table. A girl with visibly beautiful legs was smiling wickedly at him.

“Didn’t I ask you before to treat Ara well?”

“....I didn’t chase her off.”

Add frowned at Eun’s sudden appearance. Two legs held up as if to purposely show them off. The way she bobbed the tip of her feet was really annoying but Add continued to stare at the map as if he didn’t see anything.

But then the map suddenly seemed to float up and went into Eun’s hand. Add was stunned by this unknown phenomenon and couldn’t react. Eun looked down at the map and smiled mischievously.

“Aha, boy was really trying his best. I’m rather surprised.”

“Hand it over.”

Why was this thing popping up right now and distracting him? Add frowned as he stretched out his hand but Eun turned her hand around to hide the map behind her back.

“....Why are you getting in my way?”

“Getting in your way? I’m doing this to tell boy the proper way. How saddening.”

Eun across the candle smiled.

“Boy is misunderstanding greatly. First, what is boy’s goal?”

“....It’s obtaining Eve’s core.”

Add replied reflexively. Then he realized what Eun was about to say and spoke out first.

“I’m telling you this now. I’m doing this in order to obtain it in the moment that I can accept, with the method that I can accept. I shouldn’t have any reason to hear your nagging.”

“My, it’s really saddening to hear you say that. Weren’t boy and I accomplices who ridicules time together?”

Eun made a sigh as if she was really regretful. When Add ignored her and held out his hand asking for the map back, Eun sighed then held out her hand with the map.

Then....a sudden fire erupted from Eun’s hand. The map burned away immediately and didn’t even leave any ashes.

“....Why you.”

The result of his hours of investment got turned into pile of ashes in a single moment. Add couldn't even get angry right away. When dumfounded Add was finally about to explode, Eun made an ignorant smile.

"I already told boy that I can offer him a much better solution. What I brought is not this kind of vague 60% chance of success but a plan with 100% chance of victory."

"....What is it?"

Add asked although he had a hunch what it was. It wouldn't be late to get angry after he listened to what it was.

"Keep trying. Try and try again. If you were wrong this time, then try again with a different method. If you failed after turning back 1 hour, then try turning back 2 hours. If 2 hours didn't work then try turning back a day. Doesn't boy have privilege and ability to do this?"

"...."

"Repeatedly time travel and keep changing the plan each time. Isn't this a great plan, boy?"

The suggestion Eun made with a seductive smile....was truly correct. Didn't he already defeat Shadow Master in Elder and succeeded in saving Eve using this method?

But Add didn't nod and glared at Eun sharply.

"I'm not falling for your tricks."

"Hmm, tricks? Such saddening words when I'm doing my sincere best for the boy."

Eun wagged her tails gently and made a sly smile. But Add's cold stare didn't change.

"I don't know why you keep trying to coax me into time traveling; you have a certain goal but are not willing to share it with me. Also, Elsword changed suddenly like that. I don't know what might change when I time travel yet you still want me to perform it?"

"Wasn't everything worthless to boy except the girl? There shouldn't be any losses for boy if a person or the world changes a bit. Am I correct?"

Eun was asking with a tone as if this was unexpected. Add didn't know what Eun's goals were.... But he could now roughly speculate that Eun was trying to make Add time travel to seek for a certain change.

Elsword's change was a good example.

"How can I trust that some change won't happen to Eve?"

“Aha, so boy is saying he won’t do it because he doesn’t trust me? Did he stop to think that if I was trying to trick him that I would have sent him to some strange time already?”

“You need me.”

Add coldly and haughtily looked down at Eun.

This thing that kept making a wicked smile, Ara said this was a Celestial Spirit, but Add could only see this as a wily beast.

Add sharply defined their relationship.

“But I’m only using you. Don’t get any wrong ideas, fox.”

“My, it seems boy doesn’t have any speck of comradeship. But don’t I know more about boy and understand him better than anyone else?”

“I don’t need your understanding. I’m the one who comes up with plans and I’m also the one who makes decisions regarding time travels. So you can just stay quiet and help out whenever needed. I’ll call you out when I need you.”

“Don’t you think I have a worth not just in time travel but as a fighting force? It was my skill that cleanly wrapped up the situation when boy collapsed after his fight with Shadow Master.”

“You probably won’t let Ara fall into danger. Coming out to help or not, do whatever you want.”

“That’s wrong, boy.”

Eun’s voice suddenly turned cold. If she had a sneaky and mischievous voice before, this voice was like the sheet of ice.

“Ara is really a good child. She will sincerely help boy and the others in their fights and give it her best to achieve her goals in any situation. But I’m different. I’ll immediately take over Ara’s body by force and escape the battlefield without looking back if a fight that I cannot do anything about within my power occurs.”

It wasn’t just a simple warning.

“Of course, Ara will be extremely mad at me if I did such a thing. But it doesn’t matter. I’ll prioritize Ara’s safety over anything else. It’s a big mistake to think that a fox will help someone without any galls or livers in return.”

“.....I didn’t hope for you to.”

Add answered late and was a bit startled. So far Eun’s attitude had been just brazenly teasing him while saying she’d help without any conditions. Now she was clearly drawing the line.

This was an unexpected display from Eun but Add could understand how she wanted to prioritize Ara's safety over anything else.

"Boy doesn't trust me, don't put faith in my words, and is ruthlessly treating me like some object in a pocket.....But one never knows when they might get their thigh stabbed by a pin inside the pocket. Or that pin could break out of the pocket."

Eun spoke with a lecturing tone.

"It's all up to boy's choice. But don't think that I will always move according to boy's wishes after being treated like this. Open your heart to me and ask me for help if you see me as a comrade. Don't expect anything otherwise."

"....I didn't expect anything."

Add was surprised at Eun's sudden change in reaction but he didn't back down.

This was actually a fight for leadership. He didn't know Eun's objectives and Eun possessed a lot of information.....But it was certain from her actions that she needed Add's help in order to achieve her goals.

Also Add needed Eun's help in the case he needed to time travel.

They needed each other but Add couldn't trust Eun in the end. No. Actually, Add had never trusted anything but his own knowledge.

While they ended up boarding the same boat, the one with the helm had to be him.

"You just stand by and come out to help with time travel when I call you."

"Huhu, I'll do that if you wish but....."

Eun with a different mood narrowed her eyes ever so thinly.

"So boy is saying he wants to refrain from time traveling because he doesn't know how the girl might change. Then does that mean he has no intention of time traveling unless the girl is destroyed like before?"

"That's obvious."

Add realized graveness of the situation when Elsword changed. Time travel was actually a very delicate area of research with various theories. Even Add didn't have it all figured out. All he could do was move according to hypothesis and couldn't even determine the exact time space coordinates without Eun's help.

He couldn't rely on such an unstable flow. If Add were to time travel, it was only to prevent Eve from being destroyed.

“I’ll remember those words. Watch carefully.”

Eun spoke those lines as she closed her eyes then tied the hairpin to her hair. The white hair returned to black.....then she returned to Ara.

“Did you have a good conversation with Lord Eun?”

“.....Yes.”

Was this really the right choice? Add retraced what he said to Eun. But the result was always the same. He couldn’t get dragged around by her when he didn’t even know of her intentions. Also, some uncontrollable situation might happen if he continued to abuse time travel.

The current time where Eve was safe, this was the present he went through hell to achieve. He wanted to prevent this time from getting ruined by careless actions.

It was best to refrain from time traveling much as possible.

“Umm, Lord Eun isn’t answering..... Could it be that Lord Eun became angry?”

“What?”

Add thought for a moment at Ara’s careful question. Well, come to think of it....the conversation that went back and forth between him and Eun just now was enough to make Eun angry.

She didn’t reveal her goals and information to him. But Eun was still continuing to help Add. Add had just basically drove the point home by saying they never had such a tender relationship in the first place.

Although Add didn’t expect Eun to get angry.

“Are you sure she’s not just asleep?”

“I’m not sure. But how she’s now answering is a bit.....”

Ara trailed her words then carefully asked Add.

“Can you maybe tell me what you talked about with Lord Eun?”

Eun didn’t seem to have mentioned anything about time travel to Ara. Add answered accordingly.

“We were discussing about the plan. There aren’t many people to discuss this with.”

“Ah, Lord Eun is wise after all. Was it very helpful?”

Ara clapped as if she understood as she asked. Well she was helpful...in burning away the map.

Although it didn’t matter at all because Add had it all memorized.

“We only confirmed that there were no other ways.....”

“Uuu, I’m sorry.”

Add became confused at Ara’s apology.

“Why are you apologizing to me?”

“Because it looks like Lord Eun made Mr.Add angry. Lord Eun is a very mischievous person so.... Please don’t mind it too much.”

“It’s wasn’t like that so stop worrying.”

It was actually as if Add had made Eun angry instead. Well, she didn’t say she won’t help with time travels anymore.....

No. Was it better to maintain a good relationship with Eun up to an extent? Add groaned while pondering many thoughts. Ara was staring at him carefully then opened her mouth.

“Um, I’m sorry but....”

“Don’t say it if you’re sorry.”

“Yes, I’m sorry....”

Ara turned timid as she ducked her head down.

An innocent girl who was normally bright and cheerful but clumsy suddenly became like a frozen puppy at Add’s single word.

Why was she like that when all Add did was say one word? When Add stared at her at a loss for words, Ara ducked her head down even more. It was bit awkward to see a girl who was braver than anyone when she was fighting acting totally like a criminal on trial now.

“Don’t stop in middle of your words. If you have something you want to say, say it already.”

“.....May I ask?”

“Go ahead.”

It seemed Ara was very uncomfortable with Add. Of course it’s not like she didn’t show any signs like this in the timelines before..... But it suddenly became worse than usual?

“This plan, will it be alright?”

“.....It’s going to be difficult but there’s no choice.”

Add honestly didn't want to participate in this disadvantageous plan. If it weren't for Rena's decision and Eve who followed her, he would have just watched from afar eating popcorn.

"That's probably right, umm...."

"What? You want to stay out of it? Then go talk with Rena."

When Add spoke bluntly, Ara denied seriously and shook her head widely.

"No! I can't back out when my comrades are fighting! I'll fight my best!"

"Then why are you worried? Are you worried that I'll place you in a dangerous position?"

It was actually a plan that put all of the El Search Party in danger. But he put Eve together with Rena so Eve should be relatively safe.

"It's not that I'm worried, it's just that...."

It seemed Ara wasn't worried about success chance of the plan. She had started the conversation because she wanted to ask about something in between. Add understood her intentions and nodded.

"What are you curious about? Ask."

"About the Demons' forces. I was wondering if there were any general or commander rank individuals."

"I heard that general here was Dark Elf Chloe."

It was a name that had changed Rena's expression radically. But Ara let out a strange sigh at this answer.

"I see. So there's only Chloe...."

"Did you wish someone else was here?"

Her voice sounded as if she did. Ara nodded at Add's words and revealed her situation.

"There's a person I want to meet no matter what. But that person doesn't seem to be here."

"Who is it?"

Come to think of it, what was Ara's reason for joining the El Search Party again? Add remembered hearing it from Eve before but he wasn't interested at the time so he had let it slip by his ear.

Ara didn't reveal it right away and hesitated for a moment.

"Can you keep it a secret?"

"Okay."

The reason Eve knew must have been Ara just being clumsy and revealing it to her by mistake. When Add agreed without much thought, unbelievable words came out of Ara's mouth.

"The Demon general Ran. He's actually my elder brother."

"....What?"

Ran was a terrifyingly skilled individual that Add had encountered before. So overwhelmingly strong that he was incomparable to Shadow Master.

That Ran and Ara were of the same blood? When Add couldn't continue his words at this unimaginable truth, Ara spoke in a cloudy tone.

"Elder brother Aren..... Demons turned him like that. I want to turn Elder brother Aren back to normal no matter what. That's why...."

"Wait, that's inconsistent."

Startled Add pointed out something he found strange.

"Then why did you join the El Search Party?"

Why did someone who had business with her Demon general brother join the El Search Party? Those two choices had no relation.

Add's face stiffened after he asked that question.

"That's because, Lord Eun said I needed enormous power of El to turn Elder brother back to normal.... Mr.Add?"

"...."

Even though Ara who had noticed something was strange called Add, Add didn't even pretend to notice. It was a hypothesis he wanted to deny despite the fact that he brought it up himself.... But this was certain.

Eun said she could look into the future that's related to her more easily. If you were to believe her words, then everything turns out so that Eun had already seen into everything about how Demons will invade the Elrios continent and how Demon generals will lead those Demon armies, and how the El Search Party would confront those Demons!!

".....No way."

Add shook his head in disbelief at this theory he thought up. If this theory was correct, Eun had already seen the El Search Party's fate even before they had formed.....

"Are you alright Mr.Add?"

Add finally came to his senses at the worried voice calling him.

“I’m tired after thinking so much. I’m going to sleep now so you go too.”

“Ah, it’s already this late. Then have a good night Mr.Add. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Ara bowed politely at Add’s words and left. Add who was alone now didn’t go to his bed and brought up his thoughts from before.

It wasn’t actually that surprising. Eun had already known about the future where Eve was destroyed but didn’t tell Add anything and just helped with time travel. She also had already known about how Eve wouldn’t be destroyed in this timeline.

Add just realized that something he had treated as an object in someone’s pocket..... actually had an incredible power. Add trembled at this fact but also pondered at the same time.

What was the goal that Eun couldn’t achieve by herself despite how she possessed this kind of overwhelming power?

Lunch next day.

“There, you understand?”

Add explained the plan he took all night to come up with. But Rena didn’t look satisfied with it. She stared straightly at Add for a bit then shook her head.

“Add, I know you tried your best but this is no good.”

“This has the highest success rate.”

“Soldiers wouldn’t accept it.”

Add had obviously expected the soldiers’ reaction and that’s why he explained it to Rena.

If it was Rena, she could convince the soldiers to accept this plan. Since she was exceptionally sociable.

“Try convincing them to accept it. Starting the fight as we are right now is completely a gamble.”

“I know how you feel.... But this plan is no good.”

Rena expressed her disapproval as she shook her head. Add’s plan was so radical that even Rena had to clearly deny it like this.

“Then what? Do you plan to start the battle thinking nonchalantly that everything will turn out okay? That’s going to end up with even worse results.”

“....”

Rena stared straightly at Add without an answer. Well, it wasn't something to get angry at Rena over.....But throwing aside the plan he had worked so hard on left a bitter taste in his mouth.

Add's plan was attacking with fire.

Since the battle was bound to take place inside the capital, the fight will occur in an urban area. Velder Liberation Army attacking with fire in this situation would mean burning down your own home to expel the unwanted guests. The entire capital will be swept up in pandemonium.

Add also knew this was an insane plan. He planned it despite knowing it was insane. To attack the enemy's weak point and to overcome their numerical inferiority, attacking with fire was the only answer.

“Is the original plan something you'd do with a sane mind in the first place? The current situation is bad to the point where even Elsword who doesn't know anything is saying we should retreat.”

“We cannot leave behind civilians and the king. Also, there's a Dimension Gate still open inside the royal castle. We have to disable it.”

“No matter what the excuse is, this isn't the time to engage. This is the time to retreat and look for other chances.”

Rena also sighed at Add's words. Both Rena and Add knew the original plan was reckless.

They had the inferior forces and yet attempting to blatantly battle through an urban area while rescuing the civilians and retake the royal castle at the same time?

It was a story that'd only come up in dreams. If they really had to squeeze out some of their advantages, it would be that the Velder Liberation Army knew the terrain better and.....

“Let's try helping them much as possible.”

“....”

Add shut his mouth when Rena gave him the conclusion he expected.

It was so stifling and enraging that he was getting dizzy..... Add was holding back because this was Rena. If it was someone else, he would have left them half dead already.

“....Are you sure you want to do this? This is treading on very dangerous waters.”

“This is something necessary. Entire country will be in disarray if we don't drive off the Demons from the capital. We also need to rescue the king. We have to hurry if we consider the fights to come in the future.”

That was correct in a broad sense and Add could understand it. Add let out a deep sigh and made his conclusion.

“Alright, then please protect Eve instead, so that she doesn’t get hurt no matter what.”

“Yes, alright.”

It was a request Add had asked half expecting to get teased slightly.... Rena smiled gorgeously and added.

“I shouldn’t say that Add requested this to me to Eve right?”

“.....Yes.”

Add responded when Rena hit the mark. If Rena, the most skilled person in the group stayed with Eve, Eve would be safe no matter how difficult of a situation occurred.

“I already chose our rendezvous point. The time to notify the soldiers and to execute the plan.... Let’s make it 3 hours later. Also, I’ll take Elsword with me.”

“Yes, you can do that.”

Rena didn’t ask why. Judging by her reaction, she had waited for Add to realize it himself.

While coming up with his plan, Add had realized why it had to be Elsword-Add and not Add-Ara when the El Search Party divided into two teams. The reason Ara and Add had to be in different teams was because the two’s mobility were the best in the El Search Party.

Ara could move through the air by using flight technique and Add could use Dynamo’s flight to move quicker than anyone else. If you also consider the situation where the El Search Party needed to regroup after dividing, it was correct to have Add and Elsword in the same team.

Rena was making a smile as if she was proud of Add.

“Why didn’t you just tell me if this was your reason?”

Add had thought it was just Rena teasing him or that it was a plan to better Add’s relationship with Elsword.

“I thought Add would figure it out before long. I also thought it would be good for you to get along with Elsword.”

Well, his guess wasn’t too off. When Add sighed while scratching his head, Rena told him kindly.

“I know Add is troubled and is worried a lot. And that’s why you are not too keen on us joining something this dangerous.”

“Phew.....”

Add let out a dry sigh when Rena stood up and approached him.

He had roughly expected things to end up like this..... About how Rena wouldn't choose Add's plan of attacking with fire but still not back out from this battle. Add had realized this internally long before.

Woman called Rena that Add had seen so far was like this.

"I'm sorry I made you worry."

"Hmph, I didn't worry. I was just annoyed that the plan I worked so hard on ended up being useless."

Rena made a beaming smile then suddenly stretched out her arms to hug Add. Add became surprised and tried to escape after getting his face buried in Rena's chest. But he couldn't escape.

"W, wait! What are you doing?! Let go of me!"

"There, there. You're a good boy, good boy."

It's a funny story.... But he couldn't escape because of the difference in strength. Actually, if you just considered the physical strength, Add was the weakest in the party. He probably couldn't beat anyone in an arm wrestle.

Add frowned in displeasure but Rena continued to pat him.

"Add is really doing a good job trying his best. So don't worry too much. You don't have to suffer all alone....."

"...."

Add's struggling stopped. Rena's voice that rang in his ears.....was gentle beyond measure. Almost to the point where he thought it would be okay to forget everything and fall asleep right now.

"So....."

Boooom!! A sudden sound of an explosion tore through their ears. While surprised Add looked towards the location where the sound came from, Rena had already separated from Add and was holding her bow.

"I'll come back after finding out what happened."

"Wait! Don't come back."

Add stopped Rena who was about to dash out of the tent as he brought his Dynamos near him. This was a battlefield; it wasn't the place to wait idly for news to come.

“We’ll start the plan right away if this is an enemy attack. We’ll contact each other by exchanging code words with the Nasod Megaphones.”

“Alright.”

Rena understood immediately and agreed. Add spoke lastly.

“Take care of Eve, and be careful.”

“You be careful too. Let’s see each other after this is done.”

Rena left as she waved her hand while smiling. Add who was left behind made a long sigh.

This wasn’t like him. This was like running into a dangerous pit of fire without any preparations. But he couldn’t back out now.

If Demons were after Eve anyways....

“Kukukuk, I’ll destroy them all before they can.”

She’s mine.

Demon army that hadn’t shown signs of movement before started to move suddenly. Velder Liberation Army met the Demons in combat while executing the plan to achieve their ultimate goals.

Those goals were letting Velder’s citizens escape safely and retaking the royal castle. To get these tasks done, there was a need to draw the Demon army’s attention and.....

“Void Impact!!”

“Mega Slash!!”

That was the task of the El Search Party. Add and Elsword fired shockwaves and swung sword at the Demons that swarmed in against them. It hadn’t even been 20 minutes since the battle started, but there were already over 200 demons that the two felled.

Glitter soldiers got scared at the two’s action and didn’t approach anymore. They changed their plan to shooting arrows at them from far away. But even that was useless because Add dropped in from the sky to approach them rapidly then swept them away.

“Phew.....”

When Add returned to his original spot, Elsword had his sword stabbed on the ground while catching his breath. There was a slight sign of fatigue on his face.

“Are you fine?”

“Fine as ever!”

Elsword answered energetically but Add wasn’t too optimistic. They were fending off the Glitter army’s advance with just the two of them without any support from the other soldiers.

They were doing the work of hundreds of soldiers by themselves..... But how long did they have to hold out like this?

Well, their mission was to hold out until the Velder Liberation Army completed their goals safely..... But no matter how amazing Add and Elsword were, their stamina was limited. It was clear that Elsword was showing more signs of fatigue than before.

Clip clop, Clip clop!

“.....Something annoying is coming.”

When even the arrows didn’t work, now Glitter soldiers on Cockatiges were coming at them. Their numbers were 20. Add analyzed quickly and spoke.

“I’ll blow away the riders. You take care of the Cockatiges.”

Add didn’t wait for Elsword’s answer as he raised the Dynamo’s altitude. Flying across the battlefield on Dynamos was much easier. All Add had to watch out for were mere arrows and they were nothing like the Shadow Sniper’s beams. He could shake off the arrows easily with Dynamos’ flight movements and he could also attack from a range.

“Then....Take this!”

Add fired a shockwave at the Cockatige riders he saw below his feet. More than half the riders got dismounted and rolled on the ground at the sudden shockwave that came down upon them.

“Haa!!”

Meanwhile, Elsword shouted as he kicked the ground to charge forwards. He trusted Add’s instructions and ignored the riders. He swung his sword right away to only take down the Cockatiges. Slash! Sword slashed across with a splatter of blood and Glitter soldiers that lost their Cockatiges rolled on the ground. They won’t be able to get up quickly after falling off from their mounts.

But there were some that got a lucky landing or were completely safe..... They came straight at Elsword. Elsword who had just swung his sword was about to gather his strength, then a distortion occurred at the space where Glitter soldiers were.

Boom!!

“Kahaha!! There’s no problem!”

Add let out a satisfied laugh after blowing away Glitter soldiers with a chain space distortion.

Void Double Impact that used Void Impact stacked by two times was a straining skill for his body. But there wasn't that much strain for Double space distortion. It was maybe up to the point where he got an uneasy shaking from his hands?

There was a minor feedback to his body.....But this was nothing.

Void Double Impact was powerful but it took a lot of toll on his body so he couldn't overuse it in battle of attrition. But Double space distortion could be overused if he just clenched his teeth.

"Even double Star Dust Shower might be possible one day...."

Double was an attack method that chained skills in sequence while taking out the safety part of the formula. So Add could apply it to most of his skills if he prepared for the feedback on his body.

But the feedback was bigger for more powerful skills so Add didn't even dare to perform a Double Star Dust Shower right now.

"Kukukukuk."

Anyways, this was something for later. Add made an enjoyable smile as he looked at the Glitter soldiers in front of him. With even their cavalry defeated, Glitter soldiers didn't dare to attack again and were hesitating.

Elsword who caught his breath asked for their next course of action.

"Big brother Add, what should we do now?"

"I don't know, what should we do?"

If they won't attack first, should they maintain this standoff? Well, that didn't matter for the two of them.... But then enemies might turn their forces to other locations.

Add didn't care if Velder Liberation Army was endangered. But he wanted to avoid endangering team B – Rena and Eve.

Eun will take care of Ara so there shouldn't be any problems there.

"Wanna make a bet as to who can take down more Glitter soldiers?"

"I'll probably lose that bet."

Elsword made his conclusion without any signs of vexation. At Elsword knowing his place, Add made a satisfactory smile as he looked at Elsword. But that wasn't the end of Elsword's words.

"Although I'll win if we did this again a year later."

“Kukukuk, alright, let’s discuss this a year later.”

Add mocked as he immediately stretched out his hand to align his Dynamos and fired a shockwave. Glitter soldiers standing far away got blown away. Add’s skill of manipulating Dynamos was getting more precise daily. He could now perform the necessary calculations even while talking to Elsword.

“I’ll charge in first, support me Big brother Add.”

“Shall I?”

There was no reason to deny when he was volunteering to be the bait. If Elsword charges in like a boar, Add supports and assists from the back.

He didn’t want to admit it..... But Add realized his compatibility with Elsword in battle was very good.

Maybe even better than when he fought together with Ara, no, actually better than with anyone else.....

Elsword, the traditional knight relying on his sword that broke through the front and Add, who was in charge of support analyzing the situation and coming up with responses. Their combination was quite good.

It was almost to the point where Add was slightly having fun.

“Kukukuk, don’t slow down. Hurry up and go.”

“.....Big brother Add, what’s that?”

Krrrrrrrrr!! Add also looked in front in response to Elsword’s call then shut his mouth. When soldiers, arrows and cavalry had failed..... Demons must have applied a different method.

A giant tank surrounded by steel armor, Glitter Vanguard was rushing at them.

“Jump and get on top of it for now!!”

Add spoke quickly as he increased the altitude. Getting hit by the tank directly coming at him would mean the end for Elsword. But Elsword bravely jumped in front.

“.....”

Even though he had told him to, Add couldn’t shut is mouth in awe. No, that was a correct response.... But did that guy lose his fear? Elsword jumped high and landed on top of the Glitter Vanguard, but its surface was slippery and Elsword slipped down.

You won't be able to preserve your life after falling off the rampaging bull! Elsword quickly stabbed his sword on the side of the Glitter Vanguard and managed to hang on.

"Big brother Add!!"

"I know!!"

Add pondered about how to deal with this Glitter Vanguard covered completely in steel. It didn't look like anything would work.

Crash!!

Glitter Vanguard that was charging recklessly finally stopped after it crashed into a building. It was a shock that shattered all the windows and shook the building. There wouldn't even be a corpse remaining if a human was to be hit by that.

"Uugh."

Elsword must have received the shock too because he was about to fall but barely managed to hang on with one arm. It didn't look like he'll hold out for long.

After failing to run into Add and Elsword, Glitter Vanguard slowly moved backwards.

Add could just fly around watching out for arrows but Elsword will be in danger if this kept up. Their plan was to keep the Demons in place by getting their attention. They couldn't continue to pull back like this.

Creeeeeeee

Glitter Vanguard continued to move backwards. If it crashed into a building again, it can drop Elsword that was hanging on to it, and then crush him. Its movement looked like it was aiming for such result.

It seemed it gained enough distance from the building it just crashed into and stopped. There was no time.

"Running into something strong directly is.....

Running into it directly is a stupid thing to do! Add's eyes flashed as he quickly calculated a formula. But Glitter Vanguard was charging in front faster!!

It will crash into the wall in 5 seconds!

"Elsword! Just ditch the sword and jump sideways!!"

"What?!"

Add didn't answer Elsword's shout and stretched his hand out towards the ground. There was no time to hesitate.

"Void Double Impact!"

The shockwave Add fired from the Dynamos shattered space and made a distortion. But it couldn't stop Glitter Vanguard from charging forwards.

That was obvious. What Add was aiming for wasn't Glitter Vanguard.

Grrrrrrrr!!

A giant hole appeared in front of the Glitter Vanguard that was charging while making a frightening sound. Add had fired a Void Double Impact towards the ground and the stacked shockwave had dug a huge hole into the ground.

Crash!!

Glitter Vanguard that was charging forwards fell into the hole and rolled over. It couldn't get back up by itself now.

"Kahaha!!"

When things went as he planned, Add let out a hysterical laugh as he came down to the ground. It was extremely satisfying to see a calculation he thought up instantly to work out perfectly.

"But...."

Could it be that Elsword fell together with it? Add withdrew his laugh and looked down at the Glitter Vanguard that was now flipped over and only spinning its wheels.

He would have died if he got crushed under that.

"...."

Did Elsword die? That eye sore of a brat? Add stood silently and thought about this thesis.

Clank!!

Then a sound of wind slashing came from behind him. When Add came to his senses and looked back, Elsword was now retracting the sword he had swung.

Elsword had swung his sword to deflect the arrow that had flown towards Add's head.

When Add stared blankly, Elsword with his sword leaning against his shoulder muttered.

"Why are you staring so strangely? I just helped you."

“.....You somehow escaped.”

“You telling me to ditch my sword confused me. I just kicked that thing with my feet to pull out my sword.”

It was something Add wouldn’t be able to do. Although Add’s method was more along the lines of being able to fly in order to avoid having to use such a trick in the first place.

“We won’t have to worry about that thing anymore right?”

“Probably.”

Add threw away all useless thoughts as he turned forwards. Elsword standing beside him gathered his breath and glared at the Demon army they were standing off against. Add looked at Elsword’s side as he got swept up by a strange feeling.

He didn’t feel happy when he had thought Elsword was dead.

“.....It’s not like I’m happy because he’s alive either.”

While Add looked at Elsword with a complicated expression, Elsword frowned and looked towards a place far away.

“Big brother Add, was that in the plan as well?”

Add couldn’t answer quickly when he looked towards the direction tip of Elsword’s hand was pointing to. It wasn’t time for the sun to set yet but the sky far across was dyed in red.

And pillar of smokes that were rising up.

Velder had started to burn!!

“.....Haha?”

Add was so dumbfounded that he let out a fake laugh. The city was burning so well.

Unlike Add who was lenient, Elsword’s voice turned hasty.

“That’s direction the Liberation army headed to. Did they get found out?”

“I’m not certain.... Anyways, it’s all over if this fire spreads.”

Fire that started from the Commercial Area 1 that had lots of wooden structures was now spreading as it got carried by the wind. Entire Velder will turn into a burning pandemonium if this went on.

There’s no way Rena had caused this....

“What should we do Big brother Add? Everyone will be in danger like this.”

Elsword sounded restless and was asking for Add’s opinion. Add stared blankly then asked.

“What are you going to do if I were to tell you to remain here and watch?”

“I’ll run over there regardless.”

“Kukuk, then why are you asking?”

Add was taunting with his mouth but he wasn’t feeling unpleasant. If something went wrong, then understanding their current situation comes first. Then they had to rethink their plan.

“Rena! It’s C!”

Add took out the Nasod Megaphone and shouted their rendezvous point. Then he sped across in low fight as he stretched out his hand to snatch up Elsword. Elword who suddenly started getting dragged was surprised but soon grabbed onto Add’s hand tightly.

“Hey, it hurts! I said it hurts!”

How can his grasp be so strong? Elsword replied seriously when Add screamed.

“I’m sorry. Please bear with it for a while.”

“Why you....”

Add frowned but couldn’t drop Elsword. No matter how good Elsword’s physical abilities were, Elsword couldn’t surpass the speed of the Dynamos. Didn’t he team up with Elsword in the first place just in case the party had to meet up quickly as possible?

“Why do I have to.....?”

Add muttered at the pain in his hand but his head was already analyzing the situation. By the looks of how the fire was spreading so terrifyingly fast.... It looked like there was no way to put it out anymore.

They will have to battle in the burning streets of Velder like this.

“.....They’re insane, seriously.”

Add was at a loss for words at the theory he brought up. There was only one answer to what caused this turnout.

This fire was set from the Demons’ side.

There was no way Velder Liberation Army or Rena would set the city on fire first when they were trying to rescue the civilians and retake the royal castle. Of course, Add had suggested to attack with fire too but that was only to use it strategically and burn just specific areas.

But the scale of this fire that was spreading ruthlessly was totally different. This was an intentional arson. Someone was determined to burn Velder away entirely.

“I have a bad feeling about this....”

Demons had captured the castle but weren’t doing anything. But they suddenly attack first and lead them into start fighting. Now they were setting fire on the city as if they were waiting for the fight to start. Add felt like they had been totally played around by enemy’s tricks.

When Add was starting to feel uneasy and raised his speed, Elsword who was hanging on to him raised his voice.

“Big brother Add, over there!”

Light green haired beauty, Rena was surrounded by Glitter soldiers. Add held out his hand without hesitation and shouted.

“Particle Accel!!!”

Particles he gathered abundantly fired in the form of a shockwave and blew away the Glitter soldiers. When the encirclement broke, Rena quickly flung her body backwards as she continuously fired arrows. Each arrow held so much power that three Glitter soldiers got pierced by one as they flew away.

“.....”

Did I not need to help? Rena who had finished off the Glitter soldiers with just five arrows wiped the sweat off her forehead then waved her hand towards Add.

“Hello Add.”

“.....It hasn’t even been that long. What’s with the hello?”

Add slowed down the Dynamo’s speed to a stop then jumped off. Add’s eyes instinctively searched for Eve..... But there was no one else besides Rena.

“Where’s Eve?”

“Ah, there was something so only I came here first.”

“What? You left her?”

The reason Add joined this fight in the first place was because he had absolutely believed Rena would protect Eve. Rena made a helpless smile when Add's face turned intimidating.

"That's actually... Eve said she had something she had to examine urgently no matter what. Ara followed her so she should be fine."

"...."

There shouldn't be problems if Eun went with her. Add finally relaxed a bit and looked around.

There were layer upon layers of fallen Glitter soldiers. It looked like there were over 500 of them. Considering how Add and Elsword together managed to take down 200, her skill was extremely amazing.

But Add couldn't understand.

"Why didn't you fight seriously?"

"Hmm?"

"You were surrounded on purpose. Why were you?"

With Rena's skills, she could make it so no Glitter soldiers can ever come near her. Even if Add didn't break the encirclement, Rena could have just decided to fire couple of arrows and cleaned everything up.

But Rena was purposely fighting the Glitter soldiers close up by dodging their spears left and right and kicking them back.

"Ahahaha that's.... I thought if I cleared them out so quickly, the soldiers wouldn't gather towards me. I thought they'd get more anxious if I fought more risky almost as if I'd get caught."

"....Why would you do such a thing?"

No matter how skilled Rena was, her body was that of a frail woman. It's not like swords and spears recognized beauty and missed on their own. She could have gotten a life threatening injury if she made a mistake during her acrobatics.

"Hmm, I don't know where Eve went so I thought I should gather more attention to my side."

"...."

Rena smiled apologetically as she scratched her head. While Add was at a loss for words at this absurd answer, Rena asked carefully.

"Are you angry after all Add?"

".....Such nonsense."

If you were going to go this far then just stop Eve from going in the first place. Or follow her. Ah, but if even Rena wasn't here the Demon forces would have focused on Elsword and Add.

After admitting that Rena had made the best decision available to her after considering various options, Add shook his head with a troubled expression. His anger naturally focused towards the person that wasn't here.

"What is she thinking leaving the battlefield as she pleases? The plan became a mess."

"It must be Nasod related."

Elsword who was listening answered as if it was nothing surprising.

"Nasod matters are more important to Eve than anything else. That's the only reason she would leave so suddenly."

"...."

Well it seemed there was no other reason that would make Eve leave in middle of the battle. Add admitted this internally as well but stared at Elsword disapprovingly.

"I could have figured it out on my own."

"She's coming here right now."

Eve was running towards the group from far away. Add relaxed after confirming this and asked Rena.

"What's going on with this fire? Entire city will be consumed by flames like this."

"It's not something the Velder Liberation Army did. It looks like the Demons purposely set this fire."

"So those guys don't plan to capture this city?"

Even the smart Add who struggled with coming up with the plan all night hadn't anticipated this kind of development. It didn't make sense for Demons with superior forces that had basically captured Velder to set fire on a city that could have become their base.

Taking out the morality and danger aspects, Add's fire attack was a resolute tactic that the weak came up with in order to defeat the strong. But Add couldn't understand why Demons had set Velder on fire.

Add struggled to come up with an answer as he saw that Eve had come close enough to hear his shout and moved his steps towards her. He was going to yell about where she had gone off to.....

Grrrrrrrrrr!!!

In that moment, Glitter Vanguard that had appeared through the building wall charged towards Add. This atrocious pile of steel..... was hiding inside the building and appeared by breaking through the building!

“Void....!”

It was already too late to dodge! Add instinctively tried to hold out his hand and shout. But his head was already making the conclusion.

Too late.

I’m going to die.

He didn’t even get any flashbacks. Add blankly stared at the tank rushing toward him. Even if he had the ability to time travel, it was all over if he’s dead.

“Add!!”

Someone ran in and forcefully pushed Add away. Add who rolled away on the ground raised his head up quickly. Surprisingly, Rena was aiming her bow even though she had just pushed Add away by throwing her own body.

That’s right, even if it’s Glitter Vanguard, if only Rena can pull her bowstring....

Red hair.

Add’s heart beat loudly from an ominous feeling soon as he saw the elegant crimson hair waving on top of Glitter Vanguard. Rena was trying to fire a freezing arrow at Glitter Vanguard that had approached right in front of her.....

“Dodge!!!”

Along with Add’s shout, that thing on top of Glitter Vanguard jumped up. Rena’s arrow accurately hit Glitter Vanguard and made it freeze, stopping its charge but...

Slasssh!!!

She couldn’t avoid the sword that the woman who had just jumped swung down at her. No, even amidst this astonishing ambush, Rena did pull her body back instinctively. She could have dodged it by a dicey distance if it was any normal sword strike.

Booooooom!!

If only the tip of the attacking woman's sword didn't hit the ground and called upon pillars of flames. Rena screamed as she got consumed by dozen meters of flames that looked like they could burn away the sky.

"Aaaaaaaah!!"

When the pillar of flames arrogantly waving their tongues towards the sky finally disappeared, what came into view was Rena collapsed on the ground.

Add couldn't react right away to what just happened so abruptly in front of his eyes. Not just anyone, but Rena, who should be the strongest in the El Search Party got done in? No matter how bad the situation was, in a single strike.....?

"N, no...."

Rena's going to die like this! Add came to his senses late and stretched out his hand.... But in that moment, the woman swung her sword lightly.

Where the tip of her blade had stopped was the place where Rena lay collapsed after getting consumed by the flames. It's too far for the El Search Party.

The message of her body gesture was clear. Add's body stiffened and couldn't move his hands. He had no idea how to deal with this.

He could tell with a single glance that the target was experienced in battle and had an outstanding swordsmanship. Not only that, she had also taken hostage Rena who Add was unclear if she was dead or alive

Add desperately thought to squeeze out a solution then realized that the face of this 'enemy' looked rather familiar.

Hairs so red that they looked like they were burning,

Dark red flames played around her while guarding her.

The woman had scene of the burning city behind her back as she stared straightly at Add. A beautiful but cold face that looked like her emotions had been incapacitated. That face looked almost like....

At that moment, Add realized everything and shuddered.

What the true beginning of a fight that transcended time Eun mentioned really meant, who the 'enemy' they had to face was, what D Berthe spoke about meant.

He knew clearly now.

The flames and murderous intent that was in front of his eyes,
D's Knight.

As for whom she was.....



“Big sisteeeeeeeer!!!!”

Elsword’s tearing scream was clearly telling him who she was.

“It looks like good weather for a fight!”

[Elsword | Time Trouble] Volume 2 End